



# **NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL**

**MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA**

## **THESIS**

**COERCION AND GOVERNANCE IN CHINA:  
ANALYZING CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS IN THE  
POST-DENG ERA USING MULTIAH ALAGAPPA'S  
ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK**

by

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March 2006

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<b>REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE</b>			<i>Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188</i>	
Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instruction, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302, and to the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (0704-0188) Washington DC 20503.				
<b>1. AGENCY USE ONLY (Leave blank)</b>		<b>2. REPORT DATE</b> March 2006	<b>3. REPORT TYPE AND DATES COVERED</b> Master's Thesis	
<b>4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE:</b> Coercion and Governance in China: Analyzing Civil-Military Relations in the Post-Deng Era Using Multiah Alagappa's Analytical Framework			<b>5. FUNDING NUMBERS</b>	
<b>6. AUTHOR(S)</b> Andrew H. Tam				
<b>7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)</b> Naval Postgraduate School Monterey, CA 93943-5000			<b>8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER</b>	
<b>9. SPONSORING /MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)</b> N/A			<b>10. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY REPORT NUMBER</b>	
<b>11. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES</b> The views expressed in this thesis are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Department of Defense or the U.S. Government.				
<b>12a. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT</b> Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited			<b>12b. DISTRIBUTION CODE</b>	
<b>13. ABSTRACT (maximum 200 words)</b> <p>This thesis applies Multiah Alagappa's framework for analyzing civil-military relations in the People's Republic of China (PRC) in the post-Deng era, when several key developments have fundamentally altered the relationship between the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and the People's Liberation Army (PLA). These developments include the absence of a powerful paramount leader, the generational shifts in the civilian and military leaderships, the increasing professionalization of the PLA, the decline of communism as a legitimating ideology, the sustained progress of economic development, the emergence of a robust civil society, and the increasing legitimacy of China's political system. Moreover, this thesis undertakes an extensive review of the various explanations and theories advanced in the literature of civil-military relations, asserting that Alagappa's analytical framework offers the most comprehensive tool for analyzing civil-military relations to date. Using Alagappa's analytical framework, this thesis argues that the current trend in civil-military relations in China has brought increasing civilian supremacy, as the political power and influence of the PLA have diminished over time due to the decreasing significance of coercion in governance, the strengthening of non-coercive state institutions, China's sustained high level of economic development, and the increasing legitimacy of China's political system.</p>				
<b>14. SUBJECT TERMS</b> People's Republic of China (PRC), Civil-Military Relations, Post-Deng Era, Multiah Alagappa, Coercion, Governance, Economic Development, Political Legitimacy, Civil Society, International Actors, Chinese Communist Party (CCP), People's Liberation Army (PLA), PRC State, State Institutions			<b>15. NUMBER OF PAGES</b> 103	
			<b>16. PRICE CODE</b>	
<b>17. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF REPORT</b> Unclassified	<b>18. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE</b> Unclassified	<b>19. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF ABSTRACT</b> Unclassified	<b>20. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT</b> UL	

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USING MULTIAH ALAGAPPA'S ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK**

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of

**MASTER OF ARTS IN NATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS**

from the

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## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis applies Multiah Alagappa's framework for analyzing civil-military relations in the People's Republic of China (PRC) in the post-Deng era, when several key developments have fundamentally altered the relationship between the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and the People's Liberation Army (PLA). These developments include the absence of a powerful paramount leader, the generational shifts in the civilian and military leaderships, the increasing professionalization of the PLA, the decline of communism as a legitimating ideology, the sustained progress of economic development, the emergence of a robust civil society, and the increasing legitimacy of China's political system. Moreover, this thesis undertakes an extensive review of the various explanations and theories advanced in the literature of civil-military relations, asserting that Alagappa's analytical framework offers the most comprehensive tool for analyzing civil-military relations to date. Using Alagappa's analytical framework, this thesis argues that the current trend in civil-military relations in China has brought increasing civilian supremacy, as the political power and influence of the PLA have diminished over time due to the decreasing significance of coercion in governance, the strengthening of non-coercive state institutions, China's sustained high level of economic development, and the increasing legitimacy of China's political system.

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## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

First and foremost, I want to personally thank both Dr. H. Lyman Miller and Dr. Brian Swanland for carefully reading each chapter of this thesis and for providing helpful comments and edits. I am grateful for their commitment to helping me complete this thesis.

I also want to personally thank all my family and friends for their never-ending encouragement – you all know who you are!!

Lastly, I would like to dedicate this thesis to my mother, Sau Fong Tam, for her unconditional love and support, and for instilling in me a healthy appreciation for Chinese history and culture. Thanks, Mom – you rock!!

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# **I. INTRODUCTION**

## **A. BACKGROUND**

Significant developments in the People's Republic of China (PRC) over the past two decades have begun to fundamentally alter the relationship between the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and the People's Liberation Army (PLA). With the passing of Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping, there is no longer a paramount leader who commands absolute military loyalty and acts as the key arbitrator of policymaking disputes within the party. Today's top senior civilian leaders in the CCP possess technical and bureaucratic backgrounds, but none can lay claim to any significant experience in the military. In terms of identity and function, the PLA has also experienced change. It has transformed itself from a group of ideologically-driven revolutionaries trained under the Maoist doctrine of People's War to an increasingly professionalized body of soldiers that operate under a military doctrine focused on meeting external threats outside China's borders.

These developments in the civilian and military spheres are certain to have a profound impact on civil-military relations in China. Other significant developments in China, however, have had broader consequences for the state and society as a whole, and these in turn also affect civil-military relations. With the end of Cold War, communism has lost significant appeal as the ideological basis for justifying compliance of the military. Since China opened its economy to the world after 1978, China has rapidly modernized and received increasing worldwide attention, fostering greater international awareness of developments in China. China currently possesses one of the fastest growing economies in the world and has sustained remarkable levels of economic growth since its reform era began. In order to manage its increasingly complex economy, China has necessarily strengthened its state institutions. Moreover, China's sustained level of economic development has led to the increasing development of socioeconomic and political forces within civil society that pose administrative challenges for Beijing.

How can one explain civil-military relations in China within the context of all these changes and developments? How should civil-military relations in China be

analyzed? Most studies on civil-military relations in China have focused primarily on party-military interactions with little regard for the effects of coercion (the key function of the military), economic development, legitimacy of the political system, and the influence of civil society and international actors. This thesis suggests an alternative framework for analyzing the nature of civil-military relations in China within the context of these issues.

## **B. SCOPE**

This thesis specifically examines civil-military relations in China during the post-Deng era, which spans from 1995 to the present and coincides with the leadership terms of Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao (the current PRC leader). Nevertheless, past trends and developments in civil-military relations from the eras of Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping – which span over five decades – also factor into the analysis presented in this thesis.

## **C. METHODOLOGY<sup>1</sup>**

This thesis employs Multiah Alagappa's analytical framework for investigating and explaining changes and continuities in civil-military relations for China. This framework, first introduced in Alagappa's book *Coercion and Governance: The Declining Political Role of the Military in Asia*, was developed from an extensive study on the evolving relationship between the military and the state in sixteen countries in Asia.

In *Coercion and Governance*, Alagappa argues that the significance or weight of coercion in governance in both domestic and international affairs is the key to understanding and explaining civil-military relations. Alagappa posits that there is a direct relationship between the weight of coercion in governance and the political power and influence of the military. In other words, as the weight of coercion in governance increases or decreases, so does the political power and influence of the military. The key finding in *Coercion and Governance* is that the weight of coercion in governance in Asia is on the decline, and thus leads to the conclusion that there is a long-term trend toward

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<sup>1</sup>This section on Multiah Alagappa's analytical framework draws heavily from Multiah Alagappa, "Investigating and Explaining Change: An Analytical Framework," in *Coercion and Governance: The Declining Political Role of the Military in Asia* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2001), 29-66 passim.

declining political power and influence of militaries in Asia. Consequently, the strengthening of civilian control over the military is likely to persist.

Alagappa's analytical framework is divided into two parts: an investigative framework and an explanatory framework. The following sections discuss each part in detail.

## **1. Investigative Framework**

The key goal of Alagappa's investigative framework is to determine whether civilian supremacy (or military domination) characterizes the nature of civil-military relations in a given state and to determine whether civilian supremacy (or military domination) is a growing or declining trend. To accomplish this, the investigative framework examines the changes and continuities in civil-military relations by observing variations along two key factors of governance: jurisdiction and scope.

### ***a. Jurisdiction***

Jurisdiction is the decision-making authority to formulate and implement policy. With regards to governance, what matters is whether civilian or military elites possess jurisdiction over a particular area of governance (i.e., security policymaking). There are two types of jurisdiction:

(1) *Ultimate Jurisdiction.* This refers to overall responsibility and final decision-making authority in formulating and implementing policies in an area of governance.

(2) *Mixed Jurisdiction.* Decision-making authority is split between civilian and military institutions. For instance, the civilian government may have ultimate jurisdiction over certain issues while the military may oversee others within a particular area of governance.

### ***b. Scope***

Scope indicates the extent to which the military participates in governance. There are five areas of governance in which there may be military involvement:

(1) *Political Participation.* Of particular interest in this area of governance is whether the military serves a key role in maintaining the government and regime in power. Another important aspect is how the military actually participates in politics (i.e., serving in an advisory role to civilian politicians or using personal networks with civilian politicians to advance military interests).

(2) *Institutional Autonomy.* This area of governance denotes the extent to which the military has autonomy over its own organization and administration. Key aspects to investigate include defense budgets, recruitment processes, promotions and appointments of senior military leadership, military legal systems, and command and control structures.

(3) *Security Policymaking.* Formulating and implementing national security policies is closely linked to both the civilian government and the military, and thus necessitates the participation of both institutions. The key question is who has ultimate jurisdiction in formulating and implementing national security policies, in determining threats to national security, and in defining military strategy.

(4) *Socioeconomic Activities.* Militaries may be engaged in socioeconomic activities at the request of civilian governments, especially if state institutions are weak in addressing problems of modernization and national development. Alternatively, militaries may be engaged in these activities for the purpose of advancing their own political power and influence at the expense of strengthening civilian institutions. Whichever the case may be, the key issues are who controls these activities, who authorizes them, and whether these activities empower civilian or military institutions.

(5) *Illegal Activities.* The extent to which the military participates in illegal activities, such as drug trafficking, piracy, smuggling, and extortion, can indicate the degree to which the military can undertake acts of insubordination, exert improper political influence on civilian governments, and undermine the legitimacy of the political system. Regardless of whether these activities are encouraged by civilian governments or not, these activities ultimately affect the relationship between civilian authorities and the military.



*c. Civilian Supremacy or Military Domination?*

Civilian supremacy represents the ability of the civilian government to formulate and implement policies without military interference, to define the military's role in governance, and to set limits on what the military can do on behalf of the state. In contrast, military domination is the opposite of civilian supremacy. Whether civilian supremacy or military domination is on the rise or decline is determined by the combination of jurisdiction and scope over the five areas of governance – political participation, institutional autonomy, security policymaking, socioeconomic activities, and illegal activities.

For instance, if civilian elites are found to possess ultimate jurisdiction across all five areas of governance, then the balance of civil-military relations leans toward civilian supremacy. In contrast, military domination reigns if the military holds ultimate jurisdiction across these same areas. In addition, mixed jurisdiction between civilian and military elites can also occur and would account for varying degrees of civilian supremacy or military domination.

**2. Explanatory Framework**

Alagappa's explanatory framework explains the nature of civil-military relations as the outcome of two sets of processes: (1) processes connected to the structures of the political system, domestic and global economies, and the salience of coercion in domestic and international governance; and (2) processes connected to the interests, power, and beliefs of the civilian and military institutions and actors involved, as well as those of civil society and international actors. These processes are advanced by the explanatory framework's two sets of propositions.

*a. Interplay of Coercion, Economic Development, and Political Legitimacy*

The first set of propositions contends that the weight of coercion in governance is crucial in determining the nature of civil-military relations. The weight of coercion in governance is determined by two important factors: the level of economic development of the nation-state and the legitimacy accorded to the political system. This first set of propositions is structural in nature and seeks to explain the long-term trends and changes in civil-military relations. This set consists of three main propositions:

(1) A direct relationship exists between the weight of coercion in governance and the political power and influence of the military. In other words, as the weight of coercion in governance decreases, the political power and influence of the military also decreases relative to non-coercive state institutions. This condition allows for increasing civilian control of the military. Alternatively, as the weight of coercion in governance increases, the political power and influence of the military also increases and thus makes it harder for civilian supremacy to become the norm. As to how the weight of coercion in governance increases or decreases is explained by the next two propositions.

(2) As the level of economic development increases, the weight of coercion in governance decreases. In contrast, if the level of economic development decreases, the weight of coercion in governance increases. Sustained economic development strengthens the need for strong non-coercive state institutions to manage an increasingly complex state, society, and economy, thus reducing the reliance on coercion to govern the state.

(3) As the political legitimacy of the nation-state, government, and political system increases, the weight of coercion in governance decreases. In contrast, if the political legitimacy decreases, the weight of coercion in governance increases. Therefore, if the government, regime, and state institutions are accorded a significant degree of legitimacy and can address problems without relying on coercion (as represented by the military) to govern the state, then the weight of coercion in governance and the military's political power and influence would decline.

***b. Interplay of Interests, Power, and Beliefs***

To explain specific developments in civil-military relations, the second set of propositions becomes relevant with its focus on the agency level – that is, the level concerning key institutions and actors. It concentrates on the three variables of interests, power, and beliefs of key institutions and actors, as well as the nature and strength of political systems. It consists of three main propositions:

(1) The pattern of civil-military relations (e.g., Leninist-style party control of the military) is an outcome of the interaction between the interests, power, and beliefs of key civilian and military institutions. This interaction is regulated by the beliefs and power of civil society and international actors at large.

(2) If a state's political system is widely accepted, the beliefs (principles and norms) of that political system will shape the pattern of civil-military relations. Explaining the specific developments in civil-military relations, however, will still depend upon the interplay of competing interests and relative power of key civilian and military institutions and actors, as well as the beliefs and power of civil society and international actors.

(3) If a state's political system is sharply contested or is in transition, the interests and distribution of power among the key civilian and military institutions and actors become crucial in explaining the specific developments in civil-military relations. In this instance, the beliefs and power of civil society and international actors also factor significantly into the specific developments in civil-military relations.

*c. Key Points of the Explanatory Framework*

In short, the first set of propositions argues that the weight of coercion in governance is the key factor in determining the long-term trends in the nature of civil-military relations. The weight of coercion in governance is determined by two key factors: the level of sustained economic development and the degree of legitimacy accorded to the political system. The first set is structural in nature and is useful only in explaining the long-term trends and developments in civil-military relations.

To explain specific developments in civil-military relations, the second set of propositions is relevant because it focuses on the agency level. The second set argues that specific developments in civil-military relations are determined by the outcome of the interaction between the interests, power, and beliefs of the civilian and military institutions and actors involved. This interaction is further influenced by the beliefs and power of civil society and international actors.

**D. ORGANIZATION OF THESIS**

The following chapters of this thesis are organized to advance and apply Multiah Alagappa's analytical framework for investigating and explaining long-term trends and specific developments in civil-military relations in China.

Chapter II undertakes an extensive review of literature on civil-military relations. It explores the various categories of civil-military relations and reveals a wide variety of

explanations, theories, and models advanced by scholars. Overall, this chapter argues that Alagappa's analytical framework offers the most comprehensive tool for analyzing civil-military relations to date.

Chapter III applies Alagappa's analytical framework for investigating and explaining long-term trends and specific developments in civil-military relations in the PRC during the post-Deng era. As previously discussed in this chapter, Alagappa's analytical framework consists of two parts: an investigative framework and an explanatory framework. This chapter first applies Alagappa's investigative framework to determine whether civilian supremacy or military domination characterizes the current nature of PRC civil-military relations in the post-Deng era. Next, it applies Alagappa's explanatory framework to explain how the nature of civil-military relations in China has developed thus far. Overall, this chapter argues that the current trend in civil-military relations in China has been increasing civilian supremacy over the military, since the political power and influence of the PLA have diminished due to the decreasing significance of coercion in governance, the overall strengthening of non-coercive state institutions in China, China's sustained high level of economic development, and the increasing legitimacy of China's political system.

Chapter IV concludes this thesis with a summary of the key points presented in the preceding chapters.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### A. BACKGROUND

The study of civil-military relations deals with the relationship between civilian authorities and the military. Specifically, it examines the role of the military within the political framework and the degree to which the military is a participant in that framework. Since the military primarily possesses the ultimate means of state coercion, and because the military can operate in a highly-organized fashion, the logical arrangement in the state-soldier relationship is to have the military subordinated to civilian control - in short, civilian supremacy over the military. In practice, however, this is not always the case, as the normative state-soldier relationship can be reversed – the military can deploy its coercive assets to dominate the state. Thus, there is a paradox in civil-military relations: how to create a strong military institution that can protect the nation-state while preventing it from pursuing state domination.<sup>2</sup>

This chapter begins with a discussion on the extensive body of literature on civil-military relations, which can be classified under one or more of the following categories: 1) military intervention and non-intervention in politics; 2) the instability of military regimes; and 3) civil-military relations in the post-authoritarian state.<sup>3</sup> This is followed by a discussion on two recent theories of civil-military relations that attempt to offer comprehensive explanations of developments in the state-soldier relationship. The next section reviews various models used by China scholars to analyze civil-military relations in China. This chapter concludes with a brief discussion of the important points that emerge from the vast literature of civil-military relations.

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<sup>2</sup> Multiah Alagappa, “Investigating and Explaining Change: An Analytical Framework,” in *Coercion and Governance: The Declining Political Role of the Military in Asia* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2001), 29.

<sup>3</sup> The following sections (Sections B, C, and D of this chapter) presenting an extensive discussion on the various categories of literature on civil-military relations are largely adapted from Alagappa, “Investigating and Explaining Change,” 41-57.

## **B. MILITARY INTERVENTION AND NON-INTERVENTION IN POLITICS**

Numerous explanations have been offered to explain why militaries intervene or do not intervene in politics. The literature on military intervention in politics can be further divided into four sub-categories: 1) military professionalism; 2) military missions and roles; 3) weakness of political institutions; and 4) government performance.

### **1. Military Professionalism**

Three explanations focusing on military professionalism as the key factor have been argued to explain military intervention and non-intervention in politics. The second and third explanations challenge the first.

*a.* Professional militaries are apolitical in nature and do not intervene in politics. By contrast, unprofessional militaries are disposed to be political and regularly intervene in politics.<sup>4</sup>

*b.* Professional militaries develop corporate interests that may motivate military intervention in politics. Thus, professional militaries are prone to be political.<sup>5</sup>

*c.* Professionalization focused on internal security and nation-building politicizes militaries and leads to their role expansion within the nation-state.<sup>6</sup>

This set of explanations offers weak justification for military intervention and non-intervention in politics. Although the professionalism thesis advanced by Samuel Huntington has been the most influential for the study of civil-military relations and continues to be prevalent with policymakers today, there are many examples in which professional militaries have intervened in politics. The professional and politicized

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<sup>4</sup> This influential but controversial thesis on military professionalism is expounded in Samuel P. Huntington, *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations* (Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1957).

<sup>5</sup> On professionalization as a key factor in military politicization, see Bengt Abrahamsson, *Military Professionalization and Political Power* (Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage Publications, 1972); and Amos Perlmutter, *The Military and Politics in Modern Times: On Professionals, Praetorians, and Revolutionary Soldiers* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1977).

<sup>6</sup> On professionalization focused on internal security and nation-building as a key factor in military politicization, see Alfred Stepan, ed., *Authoritarian Brazil: Origins, Policies, and Failures* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1973).

militaries of Germany and Japan during World War I run counter to Huntington's thesis.<sup>7</sup> The militaries of South Korea, Taiwan, and Indonesia during the 20<sup>th</sup> century also provide counterexamples because these militaries were heavily entrenched within the political arena. Pakistan's military today is characterized as both professional and political.<sup>8</sup> Thus, Huntington's professionalism thesis faces considerable empirical challenge.

As with the other two theses, corporate interests and professionalization focused on internal security and nation-building provide weak explanations as to how and why militaries intervene in politics. Although important factors, corporate interests alone do not necessarily lead to military intervention because other factors, such as the interests of civilian institutions and the beliefs of the governed, must also factor into explaining military intervention in politics. This also applies to the internally-focused professionalism thesis.

## **2. Military Missions and Roles**

This set of explanations focuses on the missions and roles of the military as the key factor for explaining military intervention and non-intervention in politics. Some such explanations include the following:

*a.* The continuous threat of war contributes to the political ascendance of the military. As the level of threats to the state increases, military domination of politics rises and thus increases the chances for the development of a garrison state.<sup>9</sup>

*b.* Specific missions of the military influence the nature of civil-military relations. There is a lack of consensus, however, on which type of mission leads to stable civilian control. One scholar has argued that international or external missions for the military lead to stable civilian control, while domestic or internal missions lead to

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<sup>7</sup> Samuel E. Finer, *Man on Horseback: The Role of the Military in Politics* (London: Pall Mall Press, 1962; reprint, New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Publishers, 2002), xvi, 25.

<sup>8</sup> Alagappa, "Investigating and Explaining Change," 43.

<sup>9</sup> The garrison state thesis was first advanced in Harold D. Lasswell, "The Garrison State," *American Journal of Sociology* 46, no. 4 (January 1941): 455-68. Also see Harold D. Lasswell, "The Garrison State Hypothesis Today," in Samuel P. Huntington, ed., *Changing Patterns in Military Politics* (New York, N.Y.: Free Press, 1962).

a variety of civil-military problems.<sup>10</sup> Others posit that the lack of interstate conflicts has led to the end of military rule (especially in Latin American countries) and thus has helped to develop stable civil-military relations.<sup>11</sup>

c. The degree of domestic mobilization for war largely affects civil-military relations. There are also conflicting views, however, as to whether a high or low degree of domestic mobilization for war contributes to the political ascendance of the military.<sup>12</sup>

This set of explanations also suffers shortcomings. The garrison state thesis has been largely discredited by the non-emergence of a garrison state among any of the major industrialized countries during the Cold War era, especially those with democratic regimes. If the garrison state thesis were true, the Cold War environment would have produced a proliferation of garrison states worldwide. As previously observed above, the other two theses focusing on the specific missions of the military and degrees of domestic mobilization for war produce inconclusive explanations.<sup>13</sup>

### **3. Weakness of Political Institutions**

This set of explanations argues that the weakness of political institutions in addressing and solving problems of the state is the key variable in determining civil-military relations. One major explanation advanced in this set connects military intervention in politics to the level of political culture – that is, the degree of public attachment to civilian institutions and political legitimacy accorded to civilian leaders. According to this explanation, the level of political culture largely determines whether the military has the opportunity to intervene in politics. In other words, high levels of

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<sup>10</sup> Michael C. Desch, “Threat Environments and Military Missions,” in Larry Diamond and Marc F. Plattner, eds., *Civil-Military Relations and Democracy* (Baltimore, Md.: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996).

<sup>11</sup> Larry Diamond and Marc F. Plattner, eds., *Civil-Military Relations and Democracy* (Baltimore, Md.: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), xvi-xvii.

<sup>12</sup> On high degrees of domestic mobilization for war as the cause for the political ascendance of the military, see Brian M. Downing, *The Military Revolution and Political Change: Origins of Democracy and Autocracy in Early Modern Europe* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1992). For the opposing view, see Charles Tilly, “War Making and State Making as Organized Crime,” in Peter B. Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer, and Theda Skocpol, eds., *Bringing the State Back In* (New York, N.Y.: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

<sup>13</sup> Alagappa, “Investigating and Explaining Change,” 46.



political culture (like that of modern industrialized states) obstruct military intervention while low levels of political culture (like that of failing states in the Third World) provide opportunities for military intervention. Although the military's disposition to intervene is also an important factor, it is the opportunity as a function of the level of political culture which determines military intervention in politics.<sup>14</sup>

Another explanation cites the institutional imbalance of development between civilian and military institutions as the cause of military intervention in politics. Institutions of state control – namely, the bureaucratic and military institutions – are usually more highly developed than the political institutions of governance, especially during and after the founding moments of newly-independent nation-states. Thus the military and bureaucracy are likely to intervene whenever weak political institutions fail to manage the state.<sup>15</sup>

This set of explanations does have several good points. First, this set of explanations draws attention to the element of political legitimacy, which is a key factor in determining whether the state needs to enforce its right to rule through the use of force. Second, it addresses another important element: the relative power distribution between civilian and military institutions, which is crucial in explaining which institutions dominate others. Third, it highlights the logical motive for military intervention in politics: the inability of a weak civilian government to sustain a viable state that serves the governed.<sup>16</sup>

Several shortcomings, however, also challenge these explanations. First, they do not explain *how* civilian or military institutions come to dominate the state and other institutions in the first place. They only explain the opportunities that allow certain institutions to dominate other institutions and the state. Second, they ignore the role of coercion, as expressed through the use of military force, in governing the people. High reliance on coercion in governance indicates a civilian government that likely possesses

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<sup>14</sup> The political culture thesis is expounded in Samuel E. Finer, *Man on Horseback: The Role of the Military in Politics* (London: Pall Mall Press, 1962; reprint, New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Publishers, 2002).

<sup>15</sup> Fred Riggs, *Thailand: The Modernization of a Bureaucratic Polity* (Honolulu, Hawaii: East-West Center Press, 1964).

<sup>16</sup> Alagappa, "Investigating and Explaining Change," 48.

low political legitimacy and weak political institutions to address state problems. Third, this set of explanations ignores the political effects of the international system. International organizations such as the United Nations, the end of the Cold War, and the ascendance of democracy worldwide have had an enormous impact on how militaries can influence politics and the role of the military in politics.<sup>17</sup>

#### **4. Government Performance**

Another set of explanations argues that the key factor in determining civil-military relations is government performance and, by extension, the level of economic development of the state. One major explanation asserts that the failure of civilian governments to sustain acceptable levels of economic development or mitigate economic crises provide opportunities for military interventions.<sup>18</sup> Similarly, another explanation posits that military coups are the result of low levels of economic development, whereby successful coups occur in countries with a per capita gross domestic product (GDP) below \$500; unsuccessful coups occur in countries with a per capita GDP of \$1000 or more; and no coups are attempted in countries with a per capita GDP over \$3000.<sup>19</sup>

Although the level of economic development is an important factor that provides a logical motivation for military intervention in politics, it is not necessarily a determining factor. The 1997 Asian financial crisis, for example, did not provoke any military intervention in politics in such countries as South Korea, Thailand, and Indonesia; it did, however, lead to change in civilian governments through the democratic processes of their respective political systems. Nevertheless, a sustained level of economic development does have value in explaining the growth of political and socioeconomic forces within civil society and the emergence of non-coercive state institutions (such as those of the legal and judicial branches of the government) in governing the state. These forces combined have a large impact on decreasing the state's

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<sup>17</sup> Alagappa, "Investigating and Explaining Change," 48-49.

<sup>18</sup> Egil Fossum, "Factors Influencing the Occurrence of Military Coup d'Etat in Latin America," *Journal of Peace Research* 4 (1967): 228-51; and Stephen J. Hoadley, *Soldiers and Politics in Southeast Asia: Civil-Military Relations in Comparative Perspective* (Cambridge, Mass.: Schenkman, 1975).

<sup>19</sup> Samuel P. Huntington, "Reforming Civil-Military Relations" in Larry Diamond and Marc F. Plattner, eds., *Civil-Military Relations and Democracy* (Baltimore, Md.: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 9.

reliance on coercion to govern its people. Yet, levels of economic development are only one important part of the broader picture in analyzing civil-military relations.<sup>20</sup>

### **C. INSTABILITY OF MILITARY REGIMES**

The most predominant view in this literature is that a military regime is unsustainable as a form of government. Literature on the instability of military regimes focuses on the problem of the military as a legitimate government and why the military exits from the political arena.

#### **1. Legitimacy Problem**

Four major explanations are advanced to explain why military regimes cannot sustain political legitimacy:

*a.* Military governments encounter negative legitimacy because they are faced with a “performance dilemma” in governing the state. Not only does poor economic performance undermine the military government’s legitimacy, but successful economic performance can also undermine legitimacy as well. This is because sustained levels of economic development promote the rise of new socioeconomic forces and political interest groups that eventually demand political participation in governance.<sup>21</sup>

*b.* Military governments are authoritarian by nature. As such, military governments tend to distrust political actors and exclude mass political participation - preferring stability, hierarchy, and cohesiveness in the management of the state and society.<sup>22</sup>

*c.* Political successions of military governments are problematic. Since popular elections are non-existent in military regimes, the only options available to change incumbent military governments are in fact military coups. Thus, coups replace elections in military regimes.<sup>23</sup>

*d.* Tensions inevitably arise from the contradictory nature of the relationship between the military as a government and the military as an institution of the

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<sup>20</sup> Alagappa, “Investigating and Explaining Change,” 49-50.

<sup>21</sup> Samuel P. Huntington, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century* (Norman, Okla.: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991), 49-50.

<sup>22</sup> Eric A. Nordlinger, *Soldiers in Politics: Military Coups and Governments* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1977), 53-64. Also see Alagappa, “Investigating and Explaining Change,” 51.

<sup>23</sup> Alagappa, “Investigating and Explaining Change,” 51.

state. Factionalism, cronyism, and co-optation are likely to occur among those in the military who govern and those who command the troops, thus leading to disunity within the military establishment itself.<sup>24</sup>

This set of explanations usefully highlights the fact that military regimes are inherently unable to sustain political legitimacy because of their heavy reliance on coercion in governance, their difficulties in managing the military as both an institution and a government, and their inability to manage increasingly complex states and societies. Moreover, military regimes are no longer acceptable forms of government within the international community and most regard themselves as only temporary replacements for civilian regimes.<sup>25</sup> It is not surprising that few military regimes have ever exceeded twenty years in duration.<sup>26</sup>

## **2. Military Exit from Politics**

Much of the literature on the military's exit from politics overlaps with that on the transitions of authoritarian regimes to democratic rule and focuses on the governments in Latin America and Southern Europe. Multiple explanations have been advanced to explain why militaries exit the political arena and these explanations generally attribute the phenomena to one of two sets of factors: 1) international factors, such as war, international conflicts, international institutional changes, and global economic changes; and 2) domestic factors, such as civil war, public unrest, factionalism, and economic downturns.<sup>27</sup> The important point to glean from this literature, however, is that both international and domestic factors contribute to the military's exit from politics.

One of the most influential works has been *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule* by Guillermo O'Donnell, Philippe Schmitter, and Laurence Whitehead, who argue that international factors are important, but domestic factors play a predominant role in contributing to the military's exit from politics by creating divisions between groups

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<sup>24</sup> Maria Susana Ricci and J. Samuel Fitch, "Ending Military Regimes in Argentina: 1966-73 and 1976-85" in Louis W. Goodman, Johanna S.R. Mendelson, and Juan Rial, eds., *The Military and Democracy: The Future of Civil-Military Relations in Latin America* (Lexington, Mass.: Lexington Books, 1990).

<sup>25</sup> Alagappa, "Investigating and Explaining Change," 52.

<sup>26</sup> Nordlinger, *Soldiers in Politics*, 138-39.

<sup>27</sup> Alagappa, "Investigating and Explaining Change," 53.

competing for power within authoritarian regimes. As these divisions increasingly widen, competing groups begin to seek out support from those who had been excluded from political participation – namely, the general public.<sup>28</sup>

#### **D. CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS IN THE POST-AUTHORITARIAN STATE**

This literature is mostly normative - it focuses on how post-authoritarian states should solve problems in civil-military relations, how democratic civilian control can be achieved, how power and ideas affect civil-military relations, and what level of explanation should be used for analyzing civil-military relations.

##### **1. Civil-Military Problems in the Post-authoritarian State**

The fundamental problem in civil-military relations of post-authoritarian states is keeping the military from gaining or reasserting political power in government while maintaining adequate forces to protect the state's claim to sovereignty. The predominant view in this literature is that civilian control of the military is a critical factor in the successful democratization of post-authoritarian regimes.<sup>29</sup>

##### **2. Promoting Democratic Civilian Control**

Various measures have been advanced for consolidating democratic civilian control in post-authoritarian states. Huntington, for instance, has offered several recommended guidelines for democratizing countries: professionalization of military forces; reduction of the size of the military; refocusing the military on international or external missions; replacement of top senior military leadership; and reorganization of the entire defense establishment.<sup>30</sup>

While these measures may be effective for promoting democratic civilian control, O'Donnell and Schmitter have argued a more important point: that long-term consolidation of democratic civilian control requires the development of strong political

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<sup>28</sup> Guillermo O'Donnell, Philippe C. Schmitter, and Laurence Whitehead, *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Comparative Perspectives* (Baltimore, Md.: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986).

<sup>29</sup> On this literature, see Larry Diamond and Marc F. Plattner, eds., *Civil-Military Relations and Democracy* (Baltimore, Md.: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996); Samuel P. Huntington, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century* (Norman, Okla.: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991); and Guillermo O'Donnell and Philippe C. Schmitter, *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Tentative Conclusions About Uncertain Democracies* (Baltimore, Md.: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986).

<sup>30</sup> Huntington, *The Third Wave*, 243-53.

institutions, the emergence of effective non-coercive state institutions to address socioeconomic problems, reduction in the use of force to govern the state, and the prolonged education of civil and military elites in democratic political processes over time.<sup>31</sup>

### **3. Role of Power and Ideas**

The distribution of power between civilian and military institutions and their respective interests and beliefs is an important factor in consolidating civilian supremacy over the military and in producing successful transitions of authoritarian regimes to democratic rule. Felipe Aguero has argued that the distribution of power among civilian and military actors matters in determining the outcome of democratic transitions, although Aguero accords little weight to the importance of ideas and beliefs.<sup>32</sup> Robert Dahl has argued that the strength of ideas and beliefs among civilian and military actors is crucial to the development of a polyarchy (an alternative term for liberal democracy which means “rule by the many”).<sup>33</sup>

### **4. Level of Explanation**

Scholars of democratization have debated extensively on the level of explanation required to explain democratic civilian control. In other words, should research focus on the structural factors affecting democratization, such as the international system of nation-states and socioeconomic class structures? Or should studies concentrate on the agency level, which centers on the actions and behaviors of individual actors and institutions and their consequences for democratic transition and civilian control? In short, which is more relevant for analyzing civil-military relations: the structure or agency level of explanation?

Despite conflicting viewpoints, both structure and agency levels of explanation are significant for analyzing civil-military relations. Structural factors determine the conditions and constraints that affect the behavior of individual actors over the course of

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<sup>31</sup> Guillermo O'Donnell and Philippe C. Schmitter, *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Tentative Conclusions About Uncertain Democracies* (Baltimore, Md.: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986).

<sup>32</sup> Felipe Aguero, *Soldiers, Civilians, and Democracy: Post-Franco Spain in Comparative Perspective* (Baltimore, Md.: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995).

<sup>33</sup> Robert A. Dahl, *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1971).

time. Structural factors, however, cannot usefully explain specific developments because structures do not immediately determine the actions of individual actors. To account for this, the agency level of explanation becomes more relevant by focusing on the cost-benefit calculations of individual actors which determine their actions and, by extension, explain specific developments.<sup>34</sup>

## **E. RECENT THEORIES OF CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS**

Two theories of civil-military relations have emerged in recent years to provide contemporary frameworks for analyzing civil-military relations: 1) a structural theory of civil-military relations developed by Michael Desch centering on a state's internal and external threat environment;<sup>35</sup> and 2) a rationalist theory of civil-military relations developed by Peter Feaver based upon the principal-agent framework.<sup>36</sup> Apparently, these two theories tackle the structure and agency levels of explanation discussed in the previous section of this chapter.

### **1. Desch's Structural Theory of Civil-Military Relations**

In his structural theory of civil-military relations, Desch argues that the overall threat environment, comprised of both internal and external threats, with respect to a given state constitutes the key factor in determining the pattern of civil-military relations. In other words, the structure of domestic and international threats shapes the behavior of individual actors, state institutions, and the military, and ultimately affects the strength of civilian control of the military. The combination of a high external threat and a low internal threat, for instance, establishes the conditions for increasing civilian control. The United States during the Cold War era, as Desch has argued, illustrates this scenario whereby Washington had maintained stable civilian control throughout that period. In contrast, the combination of a high internal threat and a low external threat suggests decreasing civilian control, indicative of the worst-case scenario for civil-military relations. The degree of civilian control of the military, however, becomes difficult to

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<sup>34</sup> Alagappa, "Investigating and Explaining Change," 56-57.

<sup>35</sup> Michael C. Desch, *Civilian Control of the Military: The Changing Security Environment* (Baltimore, Md.: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999).

<sup>36</sup> Peter D. Feaver, *Armed Servants: Agency, Oversight, and Civil-Military Relations* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2003).

assess in “indeterminate threat environments” – specifically, those situations with low internal and low external threats, or those with high internal and high external threats.<sup>37</sup>

Like other structural theories, Desch’s structural theory of civil-military relations cannot usefully explain specific developments, such as military coups and breakdowns in civilian control, or directly determine the outcomes of civil-military interactions and conflicts. Thus, Desch’s theory can only indicate the general conditions and constraints that indirectly affect, but not directly determine, the degree of civilian control of the military.<sup>38</sup>

## **2. Feaver’s Rationalist Theory of Civil-Military Relations**

In contrast to Desch, Feaver proposes an alternative theory of civil-military relations that focuses on the agency level. Feaver’s theory, which he calls “agency theory,” derives its logic from the principal agent framework and the rationalist method – both widely used in the study of politics. Agency theory argues that the core of civil-military relations is the “strategic interaction between civilian principals [superiors] and military agents [subordinates].” Civilian and military actors are considered rational and thus decide how to interact based upon a cost-benefit analysis of their respective situations. Civilian actors decide how they will oversee or monitor the military based on what they expect of the degree of military obedience. Military actors decide whether to obey orders based on their expectations of whether their disobedience will be detected and, if so, whether they will be punished for it. Expectations of both civilian and military actors are determined by material factors and incentives, such as the costs of monitoring the military, the degree to which civilian and military interests coincide, and the political strengths of the actors involved. Thus, the strength of civilian control of the military depends on whether civilians can detect and punish military disobedience, and whether the military can expect to get away with disobedience.<sup>39</sup>

Although agency theory is helpful in determining the conditions and factors that directly determine specific developments in civil-military relations, it also suffers some

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<sup>37</sup> Desch, *Civilian Control of the Military*, 8-21.

<sup>38</sup> On structural theories, see Kenneth N. Waltz, “Reductionist and Systemic Theories” and “Political Structures,” in *Theory of International Politics* (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1979), 47-97.

<sup>39</sup> Feaver, *Armed Servants*, 1-4, 12-14.



shortcomings. First, agency theory requires large amounts of accurate information on the political actors involved – and this is usually unavailable for research in states that deny access to such data. Second, agency theory ignores the impact of broader political structures in both the domestic and international context. Third, it underestimates in its calculation the nonmaterial value of beliefs and ideas, which largely affect the behavior of political actors. Lastly, agency theory lacks the ability to predict long-term trends in civil-military relations, since it only concentrates on specific factors and conditions leading to specific developments.

## **F. LITERATURE REVIEW ON CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS IN CHINA**

As Ellis Joffe has observed, many China scholars have analyzed the relationship between the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and the People's Liberation Army (PLA) through three approaches: 1) military professionalism; 2) party control of the military; and 3) symbiosis of the party and the military.<sup>40</sup> Coinciding with these approaches are three models of civilian control cited by Fang Zhu that China analysts have applied in explaining civil-military relations in China: 1) the liberal model (based on professionalism); 2) the penetration model (based on party control); and 3) the symbiosis model. In addition to these models of civilian control, Zhu has proposed an alternative model that undertakes a factional politics approach that he calls "civil-military dualism."<sup>41</sup>

### **1. Liberal Model**

The liberal model of civilian control is essentially based on Huntington's professionalism thesis – that is, professionalism creates militaries that do not intervene in politics. The liberal model asserts that military professionalism provides the basis for civilian control of the military and, by extension, maintains the political stability in

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<sup>40</sup> Ellis Joffe, "Party-Army Relations in China: Retrospect and Prospect," *China Quarterly* 146, Special Issue: China's Military in Transition (June 1996): 299-300.

<sup>41</sup> Fang Zhu, *Gun Barrel Politics: Party-Army Relations in Mao's China* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1998), 3-14.

liberal democracies of the West. Thus, the liberal model observes the maximization of military professionalism as an ideal form of civilian control – also known as “objective control” in Huntington’s terms.<sup>42</sup>

Although analysts have used this model for explaining civil-military relations in China,<sup>43</sup> the liberal model is wholly inappropriate for the case of China. Despite concerted efforts to professionalize its ranks, the PLA remains extensively involved in politics and continues its role as a pivotal player in the political arena. Like most other militaries in communist political systems, the PLA is considered a normal participant in politics.<sup>44</sup> In short, the liberal model fails to explain why the PLA remains politically involved even with efforts to professionalize the ranks.

## **2. Penetration Model**

The penetration model examines the use of party control mechanisms, such as political indoctrination and party organizations within the military, to organizationally and ideologically penetrate the military to maintain civilian control. In contrast to maximizing military professionalism, the penetration model depicts the maximization of civilian power at the expense of military professionalism as another ideal form of civilian control – also known as “subjective control,” using Huntington’s terminology. Although the penetration model provides a better explanation for military obedience to party rule than the liberal model, it also cannot explain why the PLA continues to be extensively

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<sup>42</sup> Zhu, *Gun Barrel Politics*, 3-4; and Huntington, *The Soldier and the State*, 80-85.

<sup>43</sup> For analysis based on professionalism, see Ellis Joffe, *Party and Army: Professionalism and Political Control in the Chinese Officer Corps, 1949-1964* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard East Asian Monographs, 1971); Harlan W. Jencks, *From Muskets to Missiles: Politics and Professionalism in the Chinese Army, 1945-1981* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1982); Paul H.B. Godwin, *The Chinese Communist Armed Forces* (Maxwell Air Force Base, Ala.: Air University Press, 1988), 11-21; and John Gittings, *The Role of the Chinese Army* (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), 152-57.

<sup>44</sup> Amos Perlmutter and William M. LeoGrande, “The Party in Uniform: Toward a Theory of Civil-Military Relations in Communist Political Systems,” *American Political Science Review* 76, no. 4 (December 1982): 781.

involved in politics, since one would expect PLA military elites to simply adhere to the orders of civilian authorities and keep themselves out of the political arena.<sup>45</sup>

Both the liberal and penetration models assume three things: 1) a clear divide between civilian and military institutions; 2) the existence of inter-institutional tensions due to a civil-military divide; and 3) the expectation that the military should keep out of politics. This is clearly not the case in China.<sup>46</sup>

### **3. Symbiosis Model**

In the symbiosis model, the party and the military are uniquely intertwined in a relationship in which the two institutions rely upon each other to maintain positions of power. As a result of the CCP and the PLA simultaneously coming to power in 1949 and the CCP's extensive penetration of Chinese society, there is cross-institutional penetration and low differentiation between civilian and military elites. Both sides share a common interest in cooperating to preserve the party regime and to maintain what Monte Bullard has called an "interlocking directorate" at the highest levels whereby senior leaders hold concurrent positions in both civilian and military institutions. Thus, the symbiosis model represents a "party control model" rather than a "civilian control model."<sup>47</sup>

Compared to the liberal and penetration models, the symbiosis model is more effective in explaining the military's extensive involvement in politics and its obedience to party rule. But times have changed, as a growing divide has taken place between the current generation of civilian and military leaders and as revolutionary elites continue to fade from the political arena. As professionalization of the PLA deepens and as post-

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<sup>45</sup> Zhu, *Gun Barrel Politics*, 5-6; and Huntington, *The Soldier and the State*, 80-85. For a detailed explication of the penetration model, see Nordlinger, *Soldiers in Politics*, 15-19. For analysis emphasizing party control of the military, see David Shambaugh, "The Soldier and the State in China: The Political Work System in the People's Liberation Army," *China Quarterly* 127, Special Issue: The Individual and State in China (September 1991): 527-68. For analysis on the political commissar system as the key party control mechanism, see Cheng Hsiao-shih, *Party-Military Relations in the PRC and Taiwan: Paradoxes of Control* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1990).

<sup>46</sup> Zhu, *Gun Barrel Politics*, 6.

<sup>47</sup> Zhu, *Gun Barrel Politics*, 6-8. On the notion of the "interlocking directorate," see Monte R. Bullard, *China's Political-Military Evolution: The Party and the Military in the PRC, 1960-1984* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1985), 10-11. For analysis emphasizing the symbiosis of the party and the military, see Shambaugh, "The Soldier and the State in China"; and Michael D. Swaine, *The Military and Political Succession in China* (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, 1992).

revolutionary civilian leaders become more proficient in governance than in military affairs, the symbiosis model will increasingly lose substantial explanatory power.

#### **4. Civil-Military Dualism**

In contrast to the three models aforementioned, Fang Zhu proposes an alternative model – “civil-military dualism” - to examine the nature of civilian control of the military in China. Civil-military dualism depicts the relationship between the CCP and the PLA as a “situation of partial integration, a two-sided process in which the political and military elites both intermingled [but] remained separate.” Unlike the symbiosis model, which suggests a cooperative relationship between civilian and military elites, the dualism model suggests that the relationship is marked by both “harmony and antagonism, cooperation and contention, interdependency and mutual suspicion.” Thus, civil-military relations in China is dualistic in nature – on the one hand, the military identifies itself as an important part of the CCP with which it shares common interests; on the other hand, the PLA’s political participation has led to civil-military conflicts and intra-party factional disputes.<sup>48</sup>

Of the four models previously discussed, the model of civil-military dualism offers the best approach to studying civil-military relations in China. The study of civil-military relations, however, encompasses many other facets of state, military, and society that need to be addressed, as previously discussed in this chapter. The power and beliefs of civil society and international actors, the political structures that set constraints on the behavior of civilian and military elites, the use of the PLA’s coercive force in domestic and international governance, and the ability of the CCP government to address socioeconomic problems all have a collective impact on the nature of civil-military relations. Unfortunately, the scope of the dualism model does not encompass this extensive range of issues in civil-military relations.

#### **G. CONCLUSION**

In sum, the explanations and theories of civil-military relations presented in this chapter advance numerous factors to explain a variety of developments in civil-military relations. To explain why militaries intervene in politics, scholars have cited military

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<sup>48</sup> Zhu, *Gun Barrel Politics*, 10.

professionalism, military missions and roles, weakness of political institutions, and government performance as key factors. On the instability of military regimes, problems of the military in sustaining political legitimacy and maintaining its authoritarian political system have been cited as principal causes. The literature on civil-military relations in post-authoritarian states offers a variety of measures, such as military professionalization and promotion of democratic values, to keep the military out of politics. Desch's structural theory of civil-military relations argues that the structure of the internal and external threat environment of a particular nation-state determines pattern of civil-military relations. In contrast, Feaver's rationalist theory argues that the pattern of civil-military relations is determined by the calculative interactions between civilian and military elites at the agency level. Within the literature of civil-military relations in China, four models of civilian control – liberal, penetration, symbiosis, and civil-military dualism - have been employed to explain developments in the CCP-PLA relationship.

Although useful concepts can be drawn from this literature review, many of the explanations and theories of civil-military relations presented here are not effective in comprehensively explaining the wide array of developments in civil-military relations. As previously stated in Chapter I, this thesis suggests the use of an alternative analytical framework proposed by Multiah Alagappa for analyzing civil-military relations in China. It offers the most comprehensive explanatory framework to date. It is structural in nature in that it takes into account the effects of domestic and international political structures. It also addresses the agency level by focusing on the interactions between key civilian and military institutions and actors. Moreover, the use of military force in governance, the power and beliefs of civil society and international actors, the legitimacy of political systems, and the level of economic development are all taken into account as well.

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### III. CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS IN THE POST-DENG ERA

#### A. BACKGROUND

The death of Deng Xiaoping in 1997 marked a dramatic turning point for civil-military relations in China. The post-Deng era has witnessed significant political and military developments impacting the relationship between the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and the People's Liberation Army (PLA). Along with the passing of Deng, these developments include two successions of post-revolutionary political leadership in the CCP, the increasing professionalization of the PLA officer corps, and the decline of communism.<sup>49</sup>

The post-Deng era has already observed the ascension and resignation of Jiang Zemin (Deng's successor) and the "Third Generation" political leadership - comprised of post-revolutionary civilian leaders who lacked military experience and few senior military officers who possessed extensive backgrounds in high-level politics. Since 2002, however, a sweeping turnover of top party, military, and state leadership positions has taken place in Chinese politics that began with the 16<sup>th</sup> CCP Congress in November 2002, followed by the first annual session of the 10<sup>th</sup> National People's Congress (NPC) in March 2003, then at the 16<sup>th</sup> Central Committee's Fourth Plenum in September 2004, and finally completed at the third annual session of the 10<sup>th</sup> NPC in March 2005.<sup>50</sup> The turnover marked the unprecedented orderly succession of the "Fourth Generation" political leadership – the succeeding generation of post-revolutionary civilian leaders possessing mostly technocratic backgrounds, yet also void of any military experience – and the rise of the current PRC leader, Hu Jintao, who now possesses the all-important

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<sup>49</sup> James C. Mulvenon, "China: Conditional Compliance," in *Coercion and Governance: The Declining Political Role of the Military in Asia*, ed. Multiah Alagappa (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2001), 317.

<sup>50</sup> H. Lyman Miller, "National People's Congress Completes Jiang-Hu Succession," *China Leadership Monitor* 14 (Spring 2005) [journal on-line]; available from <http://www.chinaleadershipmonitor.org/20052/lm.html>; Internet; accessed 30 September 2005.

trifecta of leadership positions: General Secretary of the CCP, President of the People's Republic of China (PRC), and Chairman of the Central Military Commission (CMC) in both the CCP and the PRC state.

Despite the intense political indoctrination and purges in the military ranks which stalled professionalization in the period after Tiananmen, the PLA has become an increasingly professionalized institution with a younger, well-educated, competent, and technologically-proficient officer corps.<sup>51</sup> As You Ji has argued, the PLA has “transformed itself from a semirevolutionary, semiprofessional army into a true professional army,”<sup>52</sup> although the PLA remains politicized to the extent that it continues to pledge absolute loyalty to the CCP (as opposed to the PRC state) and meddle in politics. The PLA has also shifted its mission to focus almost exclusively on external defense rather than its previous mix of internal and external defense. The last two decades have witnessed a drastic troop reduction in PLA personnel stressing quality over quantity. Commercial enterprises of the PLA have reduced substantially as a result of Jiang's order for military divestiture in 1998. Moreover, communist ideology has lost substantial basis for control of the PLA in the post-Cold War era, as revolutionary zeal has been replaced by practical need for economic development, political stability, national security, and military modernization.

This chapter first presents a background on PRC civil-military relations in the post-Deng era by exploring the following six events: 1) the 1995-96 Taiwan Strait Crisis; 2) the 1998 PLA Divestiture of Commercial Enterprises; 3) the 2001 EP-3 Crisis; 4) the 2003 Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) Crisis; 5) the 2003 Ming 361 Submarine Accident; and 6) the 2003 *Shenzhou-5* Manned Space Mission. Next, it applies Multiah Alagappa's investigative framework for examining civil-military changes and continuities in the post-Deng era to determine whether civilian supremacy or military domination characterizes the current nature of civil-military relations in China. This

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<sup>51</sup> James C. Mulvenon, *Professionalization of the Senior Chinese Officer Corps* (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, 1997), ix-xv; and June Teufel Dreyer, “The New Officer Corps: Implications for the Future,” *China Quarterly* 146, Special Issue: China's Military in Transition (June 1996): 315-35.

<sup>52</sup> You Ji, “China: From Revolutionary Tool to Professional Military,” in *Military Professionalism in Asia: Conceptual and Empirical Perspectives*, ed. Multiah Alagappa (Honolulu, Hawaii: East-West Center, 2001), 111.



chapter then applies Alagappa's explanatory framework to explain how the nature of civil-military relations in China has developed thus far. This chapter concludes that the current trend in civil-military relations in China has been increasing civilian control of the PLA, as civilian leaders possess ultimate jurisdiction over political participation, socioeconomic activities, and illegal activities; command a larger share of jurisdictional power regarding the military's institutional autonomy; and split ultimate decision-making authority with the PLA in security policymaking. Moreover, China's sustained high level of economic development and the increasing legitimacy of China's political system have contributed to the reduction of the weight of coercion in governance in China and, by extension, the decrease of the political power and influence of the PLA over time.

## **B. 1995-96 TAIWAN STRAIT CRISIS**

In May 1995, Washington granted a visa to Taiwanese President Lee Teng-Hui to visit Cornell University (his alma mater) the following month. During his visit to Cornell, Lee spoke highly of the accomplishments Taiwan had achieved thus far. Beijing strongly opposed Lee's visit because of suspicions that Lee was attempting to promulgate support for Taiwan independence, threatening the PRC's foreign policy of eventual reunification with Taiwan. PRC Foreign Minister Qian Qichen was given initial assurance from U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher that no visa would be granted, but the decision to grant Lee a visa was ultimately upheld and approved by the White House and U.S. Congress. Indeed, Beijing was infuriated over Washington's sudden reversal of policy. In response, the PRC conducted a series of military exercises and missile tests in the vicinity of the Taiwan Strait from July 1995 to March 1996 to deter Taiwan from pursuing independence, as well as to deter the United States from supporting Taiwan independence.<sup>53</sup>

The 1995-96 Taiwan Strait Crisis not only marked the first crisis in the post-Deng era, but also signaled the eventual passing of the revolutionary generation of leaders and foreshadowed the gradual emergence of a division between the CCP and the PLA. Deng

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<sup>53</sup> Andrew Scobell, "Show of Force: Chinese Soldiers, Statesmen, and the 1995-1996 Taiwan Strait Crisis," *Political Science Quarterly* 115, no. 2 (Summer 2000): 229-32; and "Third Taiwan Strait Crisis," *Wikipedia* (Updated 19 October 2005) [reference on-line]; available from [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1995-96\\_Taiwan\\_Strait\\_Crisis](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1995-96_Taiwan_Strait_Crisis); Internet; accessed 18 November 2005.

had played a key role in restraining PLA leaders from assertively voicing opinions in conflict with civilian leaders. Although Deng was still alive during the crisis, he was too sick to participate in any decision-making. With Deng essentially out of the picture, the PLA felt more inclined to assertively press for its own institutional interests and concerns regarding national security, such as pressuring civilian leaders led by Jiang Zemin for a hawkish, hard-line approach to resolve the Taiwan issue. The PLA also centered its frustration on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) for failing to keep Washington from granting the visa in the first place. Moreover, the PLA's eagerness to apply its new doctrine of "Limited War Under High-Tech Conditions" and to showcase itself as a symbol of Chinese nationalism may have prompted its promotion for a show of force response. Thus, in the post-Deng era, the crisis showed initial signs of the PLA becoming more assertive as an institution with diverging interests from civilian leadership and more willing to voice its concerns to affect policy.<sup>54</sup>

Although PLA leaders had pressed for a hawkish approach, the PLA was not the principal driver of Beijing's decision to employ a show of force in the Taiwan Strait. Instead, the decision was largely the outcome of a civil-military consensus between the CCP and the PLA in which both sides actually shared the sentiment for a hard-line approach. Moreover, as Andrew Scobell has argued, the 1995-96 Taiwan Strait Crisis stands "as a largely successful instance of coercive diplomacy by Beijing," whereby Beijing had avoided a major conflict with both Taiwan and the United States while still moderating Taipei's behavior by making Taipei fully aware of the dire consequences of any action that would antagonize Beijing (i.e., support for Taiwan independence).<sup>55</sup>

### **C. 1998 PLA DIVESTITURE OF COMMERCIAL ENTERPRISES**

On 22 July 1998, Jiang Zemin, flanked by senior PLA leaders observed to be lending tacit support, gave a speech at an enlarged session of the CMC that publicly called for the PLA to divest itself of its economic activities and dissolve its commercial enterprises, which had been substantial sources of extra-budgetary revenue for the PLA since 1985. Later that night, Jiang's speech was broadcast on PRC television to publicize

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<sup>54</sup> Scobell, "Show of Force," 229-43.

<sup>55</sup> Scobell, "Show of Force," 243-44; and Andrew Scobell, *China's Use of Military Force: Beyond the Great Wall and the Long March* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 188-91.

the official order and to show that the top military leadership had at least implicitly consented to Jiang's decision. The next day, key members of both civilian and military leaderships followed suit and lent their support of Jiang's order for divestiture.<sup>56</sup>

Interestingly, no major disputes arose within the top civilian and military leaderships; both agreed in principle to the divestiture for several reasons: 1) PLA commercial enterprises largely proved unprofitable and inefficient; 2) the divestiture focused on reducing rampant corruption in the PLA; and 3) PLA enterprises hindered military professionalization, as soldiers became more interested with profiting than with training. The military's compliance with the divestiture, however, was also contingent on the assurance from civilian leaders that the PLA would receive a generous compensation package in return for relinquishing its commercial enterprises.<sup>57</sup>

Despite mutual consent, conflicts began to arise when divestiture entered into the year 1999. As expected, some military units at the local level resisted divestiture and attempted to preserve control of PLA enterprises through a number of ways, such as transferring control of enterprises to relatives of military officers so as to retain unofficial business ties. Moreover, the PLA's compensation package for divesting its enterprises was far less than the PLA had expected. The 1999 official military budget was meager in both relative and absolute terms - much to the chagrin of the PLA. In relative terms, the 12.7 percent increase was barely higher than the 12 percent increase in the 1998 official military budget. In absolute terms, the increase of RMB13.65 billion from 1998 to 1999 was slightly larger than the increase of RMB10.43 billion from 1997 to 1998. Thus, only about RMB3 billion constituted the PLA's compensation for giving up its business operations. Furthermore, civilian leaders pursued intense disciplinary investigations to crack down on PLA corruption, upsetting officers who felt that these aggressive anti-corruption measures were tarnishing the PLA's public reputation. Despite the severity of

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<sup>56</sup> James C. Mulvenon, "PLA Divestiture and Civil-Military Relations: Implications for the Sixteenth Party Congress Leadership," *China Leadership Monitor* 1, Part 2 (Winter 2002): 1-2 [journal on-line]; available from <http://www.chinaleadershipmonitor.org/20011b/20011JM1.html>; Internet; accessed 22 September 2005.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

these conflicts, the U.S. accidental bombing of the Chinese embassy in Yugoslavia in May 1999 precluded a serious civil-military debacle and secured a more generous long-term budget for the PLA.<sup>58</sup>

The 1998 divestiture of PLA commercial enterprises highlighted two important things. First, the divestiture showed an apparently fracturing trust between civilian and military leaderships, as evidenced by the meager compensation for the PLA's divestiture of its commercial enterprises and the aggressive anti-corruption measures launched by civilian leaders. Second, the divestiture suggested that the respective interests of the civilian and military leaderships may perhaps be diverging and hence conflict with each other in the future. Thus, the PLA would have reason to be more cautious in its approach to dealing with civilian leaders to satisfy its interests. Likewise, civilian leaders would have to exercise prudence in their future interactions with the PLA.<sup>59</sup>

#### **D. 2001 EP-3 CRISIS**

On 1 April 2001, a collision occurred between a U.S. EP-3 spy plane and a Chinese F-8II fighter plane in the vicinity of Hainan Island of the PRC. The EP-3 made an emergency landing onto Lingshui Airfield on Hainan Island after it collided with the Chinese F-8II, which was destroyed in the collision, killing its pilot. The collision and subsequent detainment of all twenty-four U.S. crewmembers of the EP-3 by PRC officials sparked a tension-filled stand-off between the United States and China that lasted until 13 April 2001, when the crew was finally released. While both the United States and China agreed that the EP-3 flew approximately 100 kilometers from Hainan Island as it was intercepted by two Chinese F-8II fighters, both sides maintained different accounts of what had happened from that point forward. On the one hand, Chinese officials claimed the EP-3 "suddenly veered" and collided with the F-8II fighter piloted by Wang Wei, "ramming and destroying" the fighter and killing Wang. On the other

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<sup>58</sup> Mulvenon, "PLA Divestiture and Civil-Military Relations," 4; and Mulvenon, "China," 330.

<sup>59</sup> Mulvenon, "PLA Divestiture and Civil-Military Relations," 5-6.

hand, U.S. officials claimed that it was Wang Wei who carelessly flew too close to the EP-3 with a fighter plane susceptible to instability when flown at low speeds.<sup>60</sup>

The 2003 EP-3 Crisis raised two issues for PRC civil-military relations. First, critical facts concerning the collision and the EP-3 landing had almost certainly originated from PLA sources. Hence, as James Mulvenon has argued, it is likely that the PLA may have used the EP-3 incident as an opportunity to influence PRC foreign policy and to make the military's version of the EP-3 incident representative of the official position of the PRC government. Moreover, the PLA may have used its monopolistic control over critical information flows to shape PRC foreign policy options by placing the United States primarily at fault for the collision between the EP-3 and the F-8II. The reasons for this, as Mulvenon has suggested, may have been for the PLA to justify procurement of additional military resources to "push back" U.S. military presence in Asia and to remind the party leadership that the military dimension of U.S.-China relations deserves greater attention than accorded – in other words, the PLA's institutional interests matter. If the PLA did in fact misrepresent and exaggerate its account to benefit its own interests, there may possibly be long-term negative consequences for the relationship between the CCP and the PLA, as well as for the personnel choices civilian leaders will make concerning the appointments for the top senior military leadership. Second, in the aftermath of the EP-3 Crisis, the PLA's official statements and commentaries did not reflect the positive, conciliatory sentiments triumphed by official PRC media and diplomatic officials of the MFA when the crisis ended. Such a divergence between civilian and military official statements may indicate the PLA's displeasure with the civilian government's resolution of the EP-3 crisis, as well as an increasingly tenuous relationship between the CCP and the PLA.<sup>61</sup>

#### **E. 2003 SARS CRISIS**

Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) first emerged within the elite PLA hospitals in Beijing around November 2002 - yet the PLA did not initially report SARS

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<sup>60</sup> James C. Mulvenon, "Civil-Military Relations and the EP-3 Crisis: A Content Analysis," *China Leadership Monitor* 1 (Winter 2002): 2-3 [journal on-line]; available from <http://www.chinaleadershipmonitor.org/20011/20011JM1.html>; Internet; accessed 20 September 2005.

<sup>61</sup> Mulvenon, "Civil-Military Relations and the EP-3 Crisis," 4-8.

cases to civilian government officials and even attempted to cover up the initial SARS outbreak, which was only later confirmed by reports from official Chinese media and Western media in March 2003 and of which the full extent was later revealed by a military doctor in Beijing around early April 2003. The situation worsened as the Chinese Center for Disease Control (CDC) lacked the institutional channels to communicate with the PLA and lacked jurisdiction over military hospitals. Moreover, the World Health Organization (WHO) was even kept out of inspecting PLA hospitals, which were moving SARS patients to different hospitals to prevent visiting WHO inspection teams from discovering them. Because of the initial military cover-up, the horizontal separation between civilian and military bureaucracies, and the barrier placed against the WHO, SARS inevitably spread throughout China and developed into a serious epidemic resulting in more than 5,300 SARS cases with 349 deaths according to WHO statistics. Despite its role in containing the spread of SARS and treating infected victims, the PLA continued to be less than cooperative when asked to share information regarding the number of SARS cases in its ranks.<sup>62</sup>

The SARS crisis in general highlighted ongoing tensions in the relationship between the civilian government and the PLA. In addition, the crisis brought much attention to the leadership struggle between Jiang Zemin, who was the CMC chairman at the time and yet remained silent on the epidemic for a prolonged period, and Hu Jintao, who took the opportunity to use his authority as the CMC vice chairman to appear constantly on PRC media and push for a policy of transparency regarding the official reporting of the SARS epidemic – a move that may be interpreted as Hu's calculated attempt to consolidate his power. The SARS crisis also featured the jockeying for leadership favor among civilian and military elites, whose public statements reflected apparent loyalty to Jiang, Hu, or both.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> James C. Mulvenon, "The Crucible of Tragedy: SARS, the Ming 361 Accident, and Chinese Party-Army Relations," *China Leadership Monitor* 8 (Fall 2003): 1-4 [journal on-line]; available from <http://www.chinaleadershipmonitor.org/20034/jm.html>; Internet; accessed 22 September 2005.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 5-6.

## **F. 2003 MING 361 SUBMARINE ACCIDENT**

In late April or early May 2003, a PLA Navy Ming-class submarine (No. 361) suffered an onboard malfunction during a training exercise conducted in the Yellow Sea. For whatever reason, the malfunction not only crippled the submarine, but also suffocated all seventy crewmembers onboard. Most of all, the accident illustrated the continuing leadership struggle between Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao – both of whom were again competing for influence among civilian and military elites by appearing frequently in the PRC media, sending condolences to family members of the departed crewmembers, personally inspecting the recovered vessel as members of the CMC, and even pushing for accountability and reform in the PLA. Witnessing yet another opportunity to consolidate his power at the expense of Jiang, Hu used the Ming accident to advance calls for more strict accountability among military leaders (four senior navy leaders and eight personnel were eventually disciplined) and to open an investigation of the accident to acquire lessons learned.<sup>64</sup>

## **G. 2003 SHENZHOU-5 MANNED SPACE MISSION**

On 15 October 2003, the PRC launched its first manned space mission, designated *Shenzhou-5*. Yang Liwei, a lieutenant colonel in the PLA, orbited the Earth fourteen times over a twenty-one hour period, and subsequently landed safely in Inner Mongolia. Over the course of the *Shenzhou-5* mission, however, Jiang Zemin was not in attendance at either the launch at the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center or at the observation of the space orbit from the Beijing Aerospace Command and Control Center. Jiang's absence during the *Shenzhou-5* mission was especially noticeable, considering that he still retained chairmanship of the CMC at the time, was credited with the revival of the manned spaceflight program in 1992, and was involved in the past four *Shenzhou* launches. In contrast, Hu Jintao played a significant role in the *Shenzhou-5* mission, presiding over the pre-launch ceremony, witnessing the launch itself, and issuing an "important speech" on the success of China's first manned space mission. PRC Premier Wen Jiabao (Hu's right-hand man) also played a significant role in welcoming back Yang after landing in Inner Mongolia. Moreover, official PRC media had made sparse mention

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<sup>64</sup> Mulvenon, "The Crucible of Tragedy," 6-8.

of Jiang in the aftermath of the launch, focusing mainly on the actions of Hu. Taking all of this into account, along with the SARS crisis and the Ming 361 submarine accident earlier that year, Jiang's absence from the *Shenzhou-5* mission launch likely indicated the increasing consolidation of Hu's power within civilian and military leadership circles at the expense of Jiang.<sup>65</sup> This was made much more apparent by Jiang's formal resignation from the chairmanships of both the Party CMC and State CMC during the 16<sup>th</sup> Central Committee's Fourth Plenum in September 2004 and the third annual session of the 10<sup>th</sup> NPC in March 2005, respectively.<sup>66</sup>

## **H. ANALYSIS OF CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS IN THE POST-DENG ERA**

### **1. Investigative Framework**

Does civilian supremacy characterize the current nature of civil-military relations in China - or does the military dominate politics? Answering this requires applying Multiah Alagappa's investigative framework for examining civil-military changes and continuities in the post-Deng era. In particular, ultimate decision-making authority (jurisdiction) and the extent of military participation (scope) must be explored in each of the following five areas of governance: political participation, institutional autonomy, security policymaking, socioeconomic activities, and illegal activities.

#### ***a. Political Participation***

Political participation of the PLA is not an exceptional phenomenon in China - given the nature of its communist political system in which the military is considered a "normal participant in politics" and exists exclusively to uphold communist party rule.<sup>67</sup> The PLA's participation in politics can be attributed to four things: 1) political participation as a tool for advancing the PLA's institutional interests; 2) the

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<sup>65</sup> James C. Mulvenon, "The Mystery of the Missing Godfather: Civil-Military Relations and the *Shenzhou-5* Manned Space Mission," *China Leadership Monitor* 9 (Winter 2004) [journal on-line]; available from <http://www.chinaleadershipmonitor.org/20041/jm.html>; Internet; accessed 22 September 2005.

<sup>66</sup> On Jiang's CMC resignation, see James C. Mulvenon, "The King Is Dead! Long Live the King! The CMC Leadership Transition from Jiang to Hu," *China Leadership Monitor* 13 (Winter 2005) [journal on-line]; available from <http://www.chinaleadershipmonitor.org/20051/jm.html>; Internet; accessed 23 September 2005; and Miller, "National People's Congress Completes Jiang-Hu Succession."

<sup>67</sup> Amos Perlmutter and William M. LeoGrande, "The Party in Uniform: Toward a Theory of Civil-Military Relations in Communist Political Systems," *American Political Science Review* 76, no. 4 (December 1982): 781.



PLA's historical tradition of political participation; 3) the PLA's political role as an arbiter between civilian political groups; and 4) the CCP's command of the PLA to protect its single party rule, especially in times of a political crisis (e.g. Tiananmen Square). Moreover, the PLA's support for policies set by the CCP is highly valued, highlighting the importance of the military's influence in the political arena.<sup>68</sup> Thus, the PLA plays a key role in maintaining the political power and stability of the CCP government.

During the eras of Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping, the PLA was subordinated under an authoritarian political system dominated by powerful civilian leaders with revolutionary military backgrounds (which accorded them a high level of credibility and legitimacy in the view of the PLA) and strong personal connections with the senior military leadership. Significant developments in the post-Deng era, however, have limited the degree to which the PLA participates in the political arena.

According to James Mulvenon, two significant trends have reduced the extent to which the military can participate and influence politics: 1) the post-revolutionary generational shifts in both the civilian and military leaderships, which have differentiated the military from the party; and 2) the professionalization of the PLA officer corps. The generational shifts have been especially important because the post-revolutionary political leadership is largely composed of civilian elites who specialize in bureaucratic management and possess technical backgrounds, but share little or no personal connections with military elites because their lack of military experience. Thus, post-revolutionary civilian leaders, such as Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao, have not been privileged to the type of intimate relationship with the PLA that Mao and Deng possessed. The informal channels of influence and personal connections that once accorded the paramount leader unparalleled military control are apparently non-existent with post-Deng civilian leaders, who must cater to the PLA's institutional interests to build political support.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> Harlan W. Jencks, "Civil-Military Relations in China: Tiananmen and After," *Problems of Communism* 40, no. 3 (May-June 1991): 14-29.

<sup>69</sup> Mulvenon, "China," 318-325; and Mulvenon, *Professionalization of the Senior Chinese Officer Corps*, ix-xv.

In contrast, ongoing efforts to establish professional norms in the PLA, along with the passing of revolutionary military leaders who possessed extensive political ties and the rise of civilian technocratic elites, suggest that post-revolutionary military leaders are less able to exploit informal channels of influence, and therefore must increasingly rely on formal institutional channels and bureaucratic lobbying to voice their concerns and interests to civilian leadership. Moreover, the lack of a military representative in the Politburo Standing Committee (PBSC) implies that the PLA cannot directly articulate or influence policy preferences within the highest authoritative body of the CCP. In addition, the PLA has been mostly concerned with institutional interests and defense related affairs, and therefore has largely stayed out of non-defense related affairs, such as China's market-oriented economy – an increasingly complex structure in which the PLA is far less apt to manage than civilian bureaucrats. Furthermore, although it is unclear as to the extent of the role in which the PLA plays in the selection of civilian political leadership, the emergence of a post-revolutionary generation of civilian and military leaders that is more separate than unified suggests that the PLA does not possess vast political leverage in the post-Deng era to independently force the selection or rejection of any particular civilian political leader.<sup>70</sup>

While the PLA remains a significant force in Chinese politics, the scope of the PLA's political participation has significantly declined and its jurisdiction in political participation has been largely limited to the realm of military-related issues. Thus, this suggests that civilian leaders possess ultimate jurisdiction over the broader political landscape in China.

**b. Institutional Autonomy**

James Mulvenon has aptly described the current arrangement of civil-military relations in China as one of “conditional compliance.” In this arrangement, civilian leaders cater to the PLA's institutional interests (e.g. defense budgets and resource procurements) as much as possible and yield to the PLA some measure of

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<sup>70</sup> Mulvenon, “China,” 318-325; and Mulvenon, *Professionalization of the Senior Chinese Officer Corps*, ix-xv. For reference on current trends in China's national party, state, and military leaderships, see the Reference section of the *China Leadership Monitor* [journal on-line]; available from <http://www.chinaleadershipmonitor.org/references.html>; Internet; accessed 20 September 2005.

institutional autonomy, whereby civilian leaders permit the PLA to autonomously organize and manage carefully delineated areas, such as defense policy, military modernization, recruitment criteria, and promotions of personnel below the ranks of the top senior military leadership. In return for gaining a limited degree of institutional autonomy, the PLA refrains from involvement in non-defense related areas (such as China's economy), focuses largely on military professionalization, and, more importantly, concedes itself to unquestioned civilian control. In contrast, civilian leaders enforce civilian control of the military through the Central Military Commission (CMC), a highly-centralized command and control system, the political work system, established roles and missions for the PLA, appointments and rotations of high-level military personnel, defense budgets, and the military legal system.<sup>71</sup>

The CCP exercises civilian control through two key governing institutions: the Party Central Military Commission and the State Central Military Commission. In theory, these are two separate institutions serving the party and the state, respectively. In practice, however, the memberships in these two organizations are virtually identical. In fact, these two organizations are often simply referred to as a single institution - the Central Military Commission (CMC) - without reference to either the party or the state. The highest authoritative figure in the CMC is the Chairman – a position held exclusively by the civilian paramount leader of the CCP.<sup>72</sup>

To maintain strict operational control over PLA units, civilian leaders employ a highly-centralized command and control system, with the paramount leader commanding the highest authority. Thus, CCP leaders with proper authority can mobilize PLA units by issuing orders down through their chain of command or directly to selected units. PLA commanders, on the other hand, can only mobilize small units without prior approval from Beijing. To maintain the PLA's party allegiance, civilian leaders employ the political work system, which consists of three separate control mechanisms to ensure military obedience: 1) the political commissar system; 2) the party

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<sup>71</sup> Mulvenon, "China," 317-335 passim.

<sup>72</sup> On the Central Military Commission, see Mulvenon, "China," 321; and Jeremy T. Paltiel, "Civil-Military Relations in China: An Obstacle to Constitutionalism?" *Journal of Chinese Law* 9, no. 1 (Spring 1995): 47-51. Also see Jeremy T. Paltiel, "PLA Allegiance on Parade: Civil-Military Relations in Transition," *China Quarterly* 143 (September 1995): 784-800.

committee system; and 3) the discipline inspection system. Although political work today barely focuses on promoting communist ideology, civilian leaders continue to use the political work system to inculcate loyalty in the PLA to support the “absolute leadership of the party.”<sup>73</sup>

Under the command of the CCP government, the PLA performs four essential missions: 1) maintain the CCP government in power; 2) provide national defense against external threats and protect the territorial sovereignty of China; 3) maintain internal security (although the People’s Armed Police (PAP) acts as the first line of internal defense, the PLA still bears overall responsibility); and 4) engage in non-military activities (such as disaster relief projects) at the behest of the CCP government.<sup>74</sup>

In terms of personnel appointments, the civilian paramount leader, by virtue of his position as CMC Chairman, is responsible for directly selecting and promoting the top senior military leadership in the PLA, which include military members in the CMC and military regional commanders, to ensure the loyalty of those in charge at the top of the PLA. Additionally, to prevent the rise of regional centers of power, or what Mao Zedong referred to as “independent kingdoms,” military regional commanders and other high-level PLA officers are required to periodically rotate from their positions after a set number of years, thus assuring civilian leaders that no military region or command becomes the domain of a warlord that would pose a direct challenge to Beijing.<sup>75</sup>

Civilian leaders maintain control over the PLA’s defense budget and procurements through the exercise of state legislative power via the National People’s Congress (NPC), which, according to Article 57 of the PRC Constitution, must officially approve the defense budget as it does with the national budget. Moreover, the defense budget process adopts a “down-up-down” system - whereby the CMC, the Ministry of Finance (part of the PRC state), and other related agencies collaborate to decide on the total expenditure targets for the fiscal year, subsequently gather estimated funding

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<sup>73</sup> On the political work system in the PLA, see Mulvenon, “China,” 322-23; and David Shambaugh, “The Soldier and the State in China: The Political Work System in the People’s Liberation Army,” *China Quarterly* 127, Special Issue: The Individual and State in China (September 1991): 527-68.

<sup>74</sup> Mulvenon, “China,” 321-322.

<sup>75</sup> Andrew Scobell, “China’s Evolving Civil-Military Relations: Creeping *Guojiahua*,” *Armed Forces & Society* 31, no. 2 (Winter 2005): 235-36; and Mulvenon, “China,” 323-24.

requests from all military regions and districts, and then ultimately establish the final expenditure figures and the defense budget.<sup>76</sup>

Since 1978, the PLA's military legal system has increasingly consolidated under civilian control. According to the PRC Constitution, military courts are placed under the ultimate authority of the Supreme People's Court (part of the PRC state) and are equivalent to the people's courts that regulate civil society in China. In the past two decades, a considerable number of laws and regulations have been passed by the NPC, CMC, and the State Council underscoring the legal administration, regulation, and conduct of the military under civilian government control. More recently, the military's roles and functions have also been explicitly codified in an increasing number of laws, documents, and regulations. One of the most important laws passed has been the 1997 National Defense Law, which officially subordinates the military under state control, increases the NPC's responsibilities and oversight functions over the military, and stresses military organization, administration, and mobilization according to laws and regulations.<sup>77</sup>

In short, there is mixed jurisdiction between civilian and military leaderships with regards to the PLA's institutional autonomy, since civilian leaders cede some measure of institutional autonomy to the PLA to gain military compliance to civilian control. Nevertheless, civilian leaders command a much larger share of jurisdictional power, as they ultimately decide personnel appointments and rotations of the top senior military leadership, determine the roles and missions of the PLA, establish defense budgets for the military, maintain centralized command and control, and set the rules for how the PLA lawfully functions in service to the party and the PRC.

**c. Security Policymaking**

Michael Swaine depicts China's national security policy arena as composed of four subarenas: 1) national strategic objectives; 2) foreign policy; 3) defense

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<sup>76</sup> On the defense budget process, see Scobell, "China's Evolving Civil-Military Relations," 234-35; and David Shambaugh, *Modernizing China's Military: Progress, Problems, and Prospects* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 2002), 205-210.

<sup>77</sup> Thomas J. Bickford, "Regularization and the Chinese People's Liberation Army: An Assessment of Change," *Asian Survey* 40, no. 3 (May-June 2000): 462-67; and Shambaugh, *Modernizing China's Military*, 46-55.

policy; and 4) strategic research, analysis, and intelligence (SRAI). As Swaine has noted, “military involvement is evident in all four security policy subarenas, albeit to widely varying degrees, ranging from near total control over defense policy to limited but significant influence over foreign policy.”<sup>78</sup> Thus overall, the PLA plays a significant role in shaping national security policies, but is by no means the dominant participant.

The national strategic objectives subarena deals with the establishment of broad strategic principles, concepts, and goals that guide China’s entire national security policy arena. Because of its significance to the other subarenas of national security policy, the national strategic objectives subarena is largely composed of the top individuals who hold supreme control over the party, state, and military apparatuses. Interestingly, ultimate decision-making authority over national security objectives rests not with the Politburo Standing Committee (PBSC) as a body, but with an informal national security directorate, which consists of the most senior civilian and military leaders involved in national security affairs.<sup>79</sup>

In the Deng era, a select group of top senior PLA leaders likely performed important roles for Deng Xiaoping as personal policy advisors and consultants in shaping the formulation and implementation of national security objectives, often on a very informal basis and often with more clout than their civilian counterparts. In the post-Deng era, however, the absence of a paramount leader with the authority of Deng has fashioned a collective leadership system that necessitates more collaborative, coordinated, and institutionalized interactions between civilian and military leaders in formulating and implementing national strategic objectives, thus diffusing ultimate decision-making authority in this subarena among civilian and military leaders. Although the degree to which the PLA and its leaders influence the formulation and implementation of China’s national strategic objectives is difficult to determine, the central importance of national strategic objectives to military strategy highly suggests that military leaders exercise significant participation and exert extensive influence in this

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<sup>78</sup> Michael D. Swaine, *The Role of the Chinese Military in National Security Policymaking*, rev. ed. (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, 1998), ix-x, 4.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., xi, 7-18.

subarena. In any case, senior military leaders remain invaluable to civilian leaders as policy advisors and consultants with respect to formulating and implementing national security objectives.<sup>80</sup>

The foreign policy subarena deals with the entire spectrum of external policies and activities related to foreign affairs and diplomatic relations between China and other nation-states in support of Chinese national security policy. Accordingly, this subarena primarily falls under the responsibility of civilian agencies belonging to the PRC State Council and the CCP. Such agencies include the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), the Ministry of State Security (MSS), the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Cooperation, and the CCP International Liaison Department. In theory, ultimate decision-making authority over foreign policy formally rests with the PBSC as a body. In practice, however, most foreign policy initiatives are either directly undertaken by the MFA or recommended by the MFA and/or the Foreign Affairs Leading Small Group (FALSG – the key group of party leaders responsible for foreign affairs) and then formally approved by the PBSC, often without much deliberation.<sup>81</sup>

While high-level civilian party and state organs directly manage Chinese foreign policy, the PLA does not play a central role in the foreign policy subarena. Although the PLA does not directly manage problems in international security, it nevertheless actively participates and seeks to influence in at least seven critical areas of Chinese foreign policy: China-Taiwan relations, Sino-U.S. relations, Sino-Japanese relations, Sino-Russian relations, South Asia issues, South China Sea issues, and arms control. Because it is primarily responsible for providing national defense and protecting territorial sovereignty of China, the PLA thus believes it must have a voice in matters concerning major international security issues - especially with regards to Taiwan, Japan, and the United States.<sup>82</sup>

Despite the lack of formal channels of influence into the foreign policy subarena, there are two important interagency forums where the PLA can officially voice

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<sup>80</sup> Swaine, *The Role of the Chinese Military in National Security Policymaking*, xi, 7-18.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., 19-36.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., 31; and Mulvenon, "China," 326-7.

its foreign policy preferences and concerns: the FALSG and the Taiwan Affairs Leading Small Group (TALSG). Even with the PLA's lack of direct involvement in the foreign policy subarena, PLA influence on matters of foreign policy will depend upon the success or failure of civilian leaders and agencies in resolving foreign policy issues (especially Taiwan and, by extension, the United States), thus having major implications for the relationship between the CCP and the PLA. The absence of a paramount leader with the arbitrating power of Deng Xiaoping, coupled with the military's increasing interests to play up the significance of major security issues to advance its institutional interests, suggests that the PLA will likely attempt to increase its influence on Chinese foreign policymaking in the future.<sup>83</sup>

The defense policy subarena focuses on the broad range of policies and activities that deal with external defense and security in support of China's national security policies and objectives. Key elements dealt with in this subarena include military doctrine, military strategy, military tactics, military budgets, force modernization, force structure, force deployments, force readiness and training, military-related acquisitions, and arms control. Hence, the defense policy subarena primarily centers on developing China's national military strategy, as well as coordinating and executing military assessments, planning, and implementation. Just as the foreign policy subarena is primarily the domain of civilian party and state agencies under the State Council and the CCP, major military agencies of the PLA virtually dominate the defense policy subarena. Thus, the PLA is primarily responsible for formulating and implementing national defense policies for China, although it does so under the supervision of the informal national security directorate responsible for formulating national strategic objectives. Overall, the defense policy subarena constitutes the foundation for the PLA's involvement in national security policymaking arena.<sup>84</sup>

Principal actors in the defense policy subarena include the highest-ranking civilian party leader, senior military officers with high party rank, and the executive heads of the major PLA military departments, services, and organizations (of which the

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<sup>83</sup> Swaine, *The Role of the Chinese Military in National Security Policymaking*, xi-xii, 19-36; and Mulvenon, "China," 325.

<sup>84</sup> Swaine, *The Role of the Chinese Military in National Security Policymaking*, 37-40.



most influential and outspoken agencies in formulating and implementing defense policy are the General Staff Department (GSD), the PLA Navy (PLAN), the PLA Air Force (PLAAF), and the Commission on Science, Technology, and Industry for National Defense (COSTIND)).<sup>85</sup>

The top tier of principal actors in this subarena encompasses the most senior members in the CMC - namely, the CMC chairman (who is also the civilian paramount leader) and the CMC vice chairmen. These individuals together form an informal CMC executive committee, which exercises ultimate decision-making authority concerning national defense policies, often with the formal approval of members of the PBSC. The most critical and influential decision-makers are almost certainly the CMC vice chairmen who also double as high-ranking PLA generals – as senior PLA leaders, they are the most qualified and well-experienced to administer military and defense-related affairs at the national level.<sup>86</sup> In the post-Deng era, the civilian paramount leader (i.e., Jiang Zemin or Hu Jintao), undoubtedly lacking military experience, virtually follows the lead of the top PLA leadership with regards to defense policymaking, and thus plays the role of official communicator and policy advocate of the PLA's views on national defense policies.<sup>87</sup>

The strategic research, analysis, and intelligence (SRAI) subarena encompasses the full spectrum of specialist research, expert analyses, policy recommendations, and intelligence collection practices used to support the decision-making processes and guide the activities of policymakers and agencies within the other subarenas of national strategic objectives, foreign policy, and defense policy. This subarena comprises of an extensive range of both civilian and military institutions,

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<sup>85</sup> Swaine, *The Role of the Chinese Military in National Security Policymaking*, 40-55.

<sup>86</sup> In the latter years of the Jiang era, there were a total of three CMC vice chairmen – two of which were high-ranking PLA generals (Zhang Wannian and Chi Haotian). The third vice chairman was none other than the current CMC Chairman, Hu Jintao. As of March 2005, three CMC vice chairmen preside under Hu – all of which are PLA generals (Guo Boxiong, Cao Gangchuan, and Xu Caihou). For biographical data on China's military leadership, see the *China Vitae* [research database on-line]; available from <http://www.chinavitae.com>; Internet; accessed 11 October 2005. On the compositions of the party CMC, the state CMC, and China's military leadership since October 2001, see the Reference section of the online *China Leadership Monitor* [journal on-line]; available from <http://www.chinaleadershipmonitor.org/references.html>; Internet; accessed 11 October 2005.

<sup>87</sup> Swaine, *The Role of the Chinese Military in National Security Policymaking*, 40-55.

departments, and organizations - collectively referred to by David Shambaugh as China's "national security research bureaucracy"<sup>88</sup> - whereby each agency conducts research, analyzes information, produces policy recommendations, and/or gathers intelligence on a vast array of subjects that are of critical interest to national security policymakers. Such subjects include international relations; regional and country studies; strategic and security studies; political, economic, social, and military developments in the global or regional context; and foreign military capabilities, doctrines, strategies, and tactics.<sup>89</sup>

Within the SRAI subarena, both civilian and military agencies jointly operate to support the other subarenas. The most significant civilian agencies are those attached to the MSS, MFA, and the Xinhua News Agency. Other less significant civilian agencies are attached to the State Council, the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS), and various major universities. These civilian agencies, however, pale in comparison to their military counterparts. Indeed, military agencies are the major actors within the SRAI subarena, producing the most significant strategic research, analysis, and intelligence products that substantially influence the entire national security policy arena. Key military agencies are those attached to the Ministry of National Defense (MND), COSTIND, and the GSD's Operations Department. The Second (Intelligence), Third (Signals Intelligence), and Fourth (Electronic Warfare) Sub-Departments of the GSD's Operations Department are the premier military agencies of the SRAI subarena. Of these, the Second Sub-Department is the most superior source for national-level intelligence and military-related strategic analysis for senior leadership. Intelligence reports analyzing China's external threat environment (which include foreign military capabilities and U.S. military presence in Asia), for instance, are often generated by military strategists from the Second Sub-Department. Thus, in the SRAI subarena, military agencies providing strategic research, analysis, and intelligence play a significant

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<sup>88</sup> David Shambaugh, "China's National Security Research Bureaucracy," *China Quarterly* 110 (June 1987): 276-304.

<sup>89</sup> Swaine, *The Role of the Chinese Military in National Security Policymaking*, 57-59.

role in shaping national strategic objectives, foreign policy, and defense policy – much more so than their civilian counterparts.<sup>90</sup>

Overall, the cumulative effect of military involvement in the entire national security policy arena is “more indirect than direct,” whereby the PLA plays a critical role in shaping national strategic objectives, foreign policy, and defense policy, as well as providing the strategic research, analysis, and intelligence that serve as the principal source for civilian leadership in determining China’s security situation.<sup>91</sup> In the eras of Mao and Deng, personal interactions and informal advice from individual military leaders and elders were the primary sources for the paramount leader in determining national security policies for China. In the post-Deng era, however, the process of formulating and implementing national security policies has become much more bureaucratic and institutionalized in nature. Moreover, ultimate decision-making authority and leadership over the entire national security policy arena has become much more diffuse, especially in the absence of a paramount leader that wields unquestionable power and personal control of the military.<sup>92</sup>

Although ultimate jurisdiction is diffused among civilian and military leaders in the post-Deng era, the PLA nevertheless commands significant influence on national security policymaking, as the PLA possesses the principal sources for defining China’s national security threat environment, virtually dominates the defense policy subarena, seeks to influence foreign policymaking, and actively participates as policy advisors and consultants to civilian leadership in formulating and implementing national strategic objectives.

#### ***d. Socioeconomic Activities***

Military involvement in socioeconomic activities in China traces back nearly 2000 years to the early dynastic period. Traditional military forces in China were expected to be partially, if not fully, self-sustaining in producing food and supplies with their own farms and enterprises to alleviate dynastic governments from bearing the full

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<sup>90</sup> Swaine, *The Role of the Chinese Military in National Security Policymaking*, xii, 60-71; and Mulvenon, “China,” 326.

<sup>91</sup> Mulvenon, “China,” 325.

<sup>92</sup> Swaine, *The Role of the Chinese Military in National Security Policymaking*, 14.

and costly burden of maintaining standing armies. The PLA continued this tradition of military self-sufficiency when it first began developing farms and enterprises in 1928 virtually out of necessity, since the PLA needed its own means of production to supply not only itself, but also the local peasantry so as to develop a strong political and economic relationship with them and to ultimately enlist their support for the communist movement. Military self-sufficiency also helped the PLA avoid becoming vulnerable and dependent on goods and services from external sources that would have been cut off by Nationalist forces. Mao and other CCP leaders were especially pleased with the PLA's self-sufficient productivity, since it provided for much of the PLA's own needs, helped improve relations between the PLA and "the masses," and helped consolidate the CCP's political power throughout China in the initial years after the PRC was established in 1949. Thus throughout the Mao era, PLA enterprises, mostly regarded as legitimate by both civilian and military leaders, grew in number, output, and diversity - although most military enterprises were generating agricultural and industrial goods exclusively for military use.<sup>93</sup>

In the early years of the reform era, civilian leaders led by Deng Xiaoping decided to shift governmental resources from the defense sector to other state industrial sectors in order to spur rapid economic development and modernization as China's economy began to marketize and integrate with the global market. Consequently, the PLA's share of the national budget reduced from 17.5 percent in 1979 down to 10.4 percent in 1985. Moreover, the CCP government announced in 1985 that the PLA would have to reduce the size of its military ranks by demobilizing nearly one million personnel. Even with this drastic reduction in the size of its total labor force, the PLA still had trouble providing basic necessities for its military personnel. As their standards of living dropped exceedingly low, PLA troops often became poor, dependent on the welfare of others, and suffered from low morale. Thus, in response to limited state funding of the defense sector, the CCP decided in 1985 to allow the PLA to commercialize and expand

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<sup>93</sup> Thomas J. Bickford, "The Business Operations of the Chinese People's Liberation Army," *Problems of Post-Communism* 46, no. 6 (November-December 1999): 28-31.

its military enterprises into the civilian market to compensate for decreased defense spending and to further promote military self-sufficiency.<sup>94</sup>

With the added incentive of special privileges granted by the CCP government, the number of PLA commercial enterprises grew dramatically, as there may have been as many as 20,000 PLA-owned enterprises during the late 1980s and early 1990s. Through the past two decades, however, the PLA's commercial enterprises became severe liabilities for both the CCP and the PLA for several reasons. First, most PLA enterprises proved unprofitable due to their excessive debts, resource unavailability, and poorly trained administrators and workers. Second, PLA commercial enterprises became political liabilities as they were increasingly associated with corruption. Most citizens believed military enterprises competed unfairly with their civilian counterparts, as military enterprises had privileged access to the government's natural resources, railroads, and industries. In fact, many PLA enterprises actively engaged in smuggling and other illegal activities for additional profit, further tarnishing the PLA's public reputation. Lastly, PLA enterprises severely hampered military professionalization, discipline, and unity across the ranks. Initial efforts by the CCP government to curtail PLA corruption largely focused on reforming PLA commercial enterprises rather than eliminating them, as well as developing a legal framework that would effectively regulate military-business operations. Both attempts at curbing military corruption, however, failed. It essentially took the discovery of rampant oil smuggling operations conducted by several PLA commercial enterprises that resulted in a huge loss of government revenues to compel CCP leaders to call for the divestiture of PLA commercial enterprises.<sup>95</sup>

On 22 July 1998, Jiang Zemin officially announced that the PLA would have to divest itself of its business activities and dissolve its commercial enterprises by the end of the year. Only commercial enterprises, such as hotels, telecommunications, and anything else dealing with commerce, were affected by the divestiture. Hence, farms and production facilities remained intact, as they were critical in providing immediate

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<sup>94</sup>Thomas J. Bickford, "The Business Operations of the Chinese People's Liberation Army," *Problems of Post-Communism* 46, no. 6 (November-December 1999). 31-32.

<sup>95</sup> Bickford, "The Business Operations of the Chinese People's Liberation Army," 32-34.

necessities and maintaining the standard of living of PLA soldiers. Despite some resistance and resentment by some military personnel, the PLA nevertheless largely complied with Jiang's divestiture order and even lent its support to a top-level, civilian leading group led by Hu Jintao to oversee the entire divestiture process.<sup>96</sup>

To the extent that divestiture has significantly reduced the PLA's source of extra-budgetary revenue and has thus made the PLA more dependent on state budgetary allocations, the nature of the PLA's compliance to the 1998 divestiture of its commercial enterprises apparently suggests that civilian leaders have ultimate jurisdiction over the military's socioeconomic activities.

*e. Illegal Activities*

In the Mao era, military corruption was largely limited to nepotism, patronage, and minor forms of bribery (minus cash) at the individual level. Because of the high-level status accorded to PLA officers at the time, corrupt officials often used their personal connections (or *guanxi*) to gain admission for their children into military service. "Back door" promotions of officers based on close relationships with senior military leaders and facilitated employment for relatives of military personnel were also common practices of military corruption. Hence, military corruption in the Mao era was narrow in scope and scale, since PLA enterprises were largely focused on producing goods and services exclusively for military consumption and were severely limited in economic opportunities for personal and monetary gains under the rule of Mao.<sup>97</sup>

In the reform era, however, the scope and scale of military corruption grew dramatically as China opened up its economy to the rest of the world. The integration of China's economy into the global market launched greater financial opportunities and incentives for military corruption to operate on a much larger scale and to participate across a broader scope of commercial activities. Hence, military corruption in China became driven not by personal favors as it was in the Mao era, but by monetary

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<sup>96</sup> Bickford, "The Business Operations of the Chinese People's Liberation Army," 34; and Mulvenon, "PLA Divestiture and Civil-Military Relations," 2. For detailed analysis of the PLA's commercial enterprises and economic activities during the 1980s and 1990s, see James C. Mulvenon, *Soldiers of Fortune: The Rise and Fall of the Chinese Military-Business Complex, 1978-1998* (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 2001).

<sup>97</sup> James C. Mulvenon, "Military Corruption in China: A Conceptual Examination," *Problems of Post-Communism* 45, no. 2 (March-April 1998): 12-21.

gain. Moreover, commercialization of PLA enterprises in 1985 further exacerbated military corruption in the ranks. Indeed, numerous military personnel exploited the new found economic opportunities and often colluded with civilian counterparts in a wide range of illegal activities for personal gain.<sup>98</sup>

In the 1990s, Jiang Zemin, with the assistance of senior military leadership, conducted a series of intense anti-corruption campaigns in an attempt to stamp out military corruption rooted in the PLA's participation in economic activities. In his speeches, Jiang heavily criticized the rise of corruption in the military ranks, calling on the PLA to be "ahead of the nation" and to adhere to the "three virtues" of patriotism, socialism, and collectivism while rejecting the "three evils" of money worship, hedonism, and individualism. In addition, Jiang further declared that the "fight against corruption is a grave political struggle vital to the very existence of the party and the state" and that "the nature, true color, and work style of the people's army" needed to be preserved. Other PLA leaders, such as Generals Zhang Wannian and Wang Ke, also reflected Jiang's sentiments and themes of anti-corruption, arguing for stronger measures and stricter punishments to stamp out military corruption that was becoming detrimental to the discipline and unity of the PLA.<sup>99</sup>

With the PLA's commercial enterprises identified as the primary source of the military's economic crimes, curtailment of military corruption made substantial progress with the divestiture order in 1998, when Jiang Zemin, with apparent support from senior military leaders, publicly announced on 22 July 1998 in a televised speech calling for the PLA to divest itself of its economic activities and to dissolve its commercial enterprises. Despite resistance from a number of PLA units, the PLA complied with the execution of its orders to divest its commercial enterprises - in total, 2,937 firms owned by the PLA as well as the People's Armed Police (PAP) were transferred to local government control and 3,928 businesses were closed.<sup>100</sup> Moreover,

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<sup>98</sup> Mulvenon, "Military Corruption in China," 12-21.

<sup>99</sup> James C. Mulvenon, "To Get Rich Is Unprofessional: Chinese Military Corruption in the Jiang Era," *China Leadership Monitor* 6 (Spring 2003) [journal on-line]; available from <http://www.chinaleadershipmonitor.org/20032/jm.html>; Internet; accessed 22 September 2005.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid., 23-25.

in 1999, as the divestiture process was underway, Jiang Zemin and Premier Zhu Rongji ordered civilian special investigative teams to conduct a full audit of the PLA's finances, probe the financial accounts of PLA enterprises in domestic and foreign banks, and pursue discipline investigations against corrupt PLA officers (many of whom were senior military leaders).<sup>101</sup>

Despite lingering resentment among some military personnel for relinquishing such a major source of extra-budgetary revenue, the future trajectory of military corruption in the PLA apparently favors a positive direction, as a substantial number of PLA commercial enterprises have been shut down or transferred to state control as per the orders of the civilian leadership. Civilian leaders, however, have been cautious not to raise the ire of the PLA with public indictments of military personnel; instead, they have focused on publicly prosecuting party, government, and police officials for acts of corruption, despite evidence of PLA involvement.<sup>102</sup>

Nevertheless, civilian leaders command ultimate jurisdiction over the military's involvement in illegal activities - as demonstrated by the 1998 divestiture of PLA commercial enterprises, intense anti-corruption campaigns led by civilian leadership, special investigations of PLA finances and accounts, and discipline investigations conducted by civilian investigators outside military jurisdiction.

*f. Civilian Supremacy or Military Domination?*

Upon examining each of the five areas of governance assessed using Alagappa's investigative framework, the scope of the PLA participation is significantly evident in political participation, institutional autonomy, security policymaking, socioeconomic activities, and illegal activities - although the scope in political participation, socioeconomic activities, and illegal activities has been significantly declining in recent times. Although the PLA participates extensively in each of the five areas of governance, the military does not dominate any one particular area. The scope of the PLA's political participation has significantly declined and its jurisdiction in this area has been largely limited to defense-related affairs. Despite mixed jurisdiction with

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<sup>101</sup> Mulvenon, "To Get Rich Is Unprofessional," 25-28.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., 32.



regards to the military's institutional autonomy, civilian leaders nevertheless command a much larger share of jurisdictional power even while ceding some measure of institutional autonomy to the PLA. In area of security policymaking, ultimate jurisdiction has been diffused among civilian and military leaders in the post-Deng era, even though the PLA commands significant influence on national security policymaking. Civilian leaders have ultimate jurisdiction over the military's socioeconomic and illegal activities—as suggested by the 1998 divestiture of PLA commercial enterprises, intense anti-corruption campaigns imposed on the military, special investigations probing PLA finances and accounts, and discipline investigations of corrupt PLA officers. Thus, civilian leaders possess ultimate jurisdiction over political participation, socioeconomic activities, and illegal activities; command a larger share of jurisdictional power regarding the military's institutional autonomy; and split ultimate decision-making authority with the PLA in security policymaking. In short, the balance of civil-military relations leans toward increasing civilian supremacy – the current trend which characterizes the nature of the relationship between the CCP and the PLA in the post-Deng era.

## **2. Explanatory Framework**

Employing Alagappa's investigative framework to examine civil-military changes and continuities in China asserts that the balance of PRC civil-military relations in the post-Deng era leans toward civilian supremacy. But how does one explain how and why civilian leaders continue to exercise control of the PLA? To answer this requires the application of Alagappa's explanatory framework to explain civil-military changes and continuities. As previously stated in Chapter I, Alagappa's explanatory framework explains the nature of civil-military relations as the outcome of two sets of processes: 1) the structural-level interplay between the weight of coercion in governance, the level of economic development, and the legitimacy of the political system; 2) the agency-level interplay between the interests, power, and beliefs of key civilian and military institutions and actors involved, as well as those of civil society and international actors.

### ***a. Interplay of Coercion, Economic Development, and Political Legitimacy***

Utilizing Alagappa's explanatory framework, consolidation of civilian control of the PLA in the post-Deng era would result from the decreasing reliance on

coercive state institutions to govern China and the associated reduction of the political power and influence of the military relative to non-coercive state institutions. To explain both the decreasing weight of coercion in governance and the decreasing political power and influence of the PLA at the structural level requires examining the overall collective effect of two structural factors: 1) the sustained level of China's economic development; and 2) the increasing legitimacy of China's political system.

China has remarkably sustained a high level of economic development since 1978, when Deng Xiaoping launched sweeping economic reforms that drew China out of its autarkic state and opened up its economy to participation in the global market. During the Deng era from 1978-1995, as a result of economic policies which significantly decentralized decision-making throughout China's economy and called for state withdrawal from a number of sectors to liberate market forces, the average annual growth rate for China's gross domestic product (GDP) was 9.8 percent, or approximately 1.5 times the average annual GDP growth rate under Mao (6.7 percent), despite economic retrenchment policies instituted between 1989-1991 in the wake of Tiananmen Square which dropped annual GDP growth rates to a range between 4-6 percent. In addition, capital investments into China's economy grew increasingly efficient as a result of China's growing participation in the global market. More importantly, per capita household consumption increased dramatically during the Deng era, indicative of the overall improvement in the quality of life in China. By the end of 1995, China had vastly improved its overall economic structure to become the world's seventh largest participant in the global economy.<sup>103</sup>

Various far-reaching measures were implemented during the Deng era that improved the agricultural, industrial, monetary, and fiscal sectors that suffered greatly under Mao's economic policy regime. Inadequate outputs of the agriculture sector were alleviated by such measures as easing the restrictions on the types of crops that could be grown, reinstituting a rural market economy for farm outputs, and, most importantly,

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<sup>103</sup> Robert F. Dernberger, "The People's Republic of China at 50: The Economy," *China Quarterly* 159, Special Issue: The People's Republic of China after 50 Years (September 1999): 608, 610-11; and author's notes from a class on Chinese Foreign Policy at the Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, California, Fall Quarter 2005.

abandoning the commune system and restoring household farming. In the industrial sector, markets replaced centrally-planned allocations of most industrial goods and state-owned enterprises (SOEs) were forced to compete in the market economy with domestic and foreign private enterprises - both of which were now permitted under Deng's economic policies. In the monetary sector, while the state remained largely responsible for investments in critical infrastructure and other key areas of nation-building, most investment activities were removed from the state budget and became financed by private funds, bank loans, and foreign investments. Moreover, commercial banks became widespread, with the People's Bank of China - acting as the central bank - tasked to regulate China's money supply in a similar fashion as the Federal Reserve System does in the United States. In the fiscal sector, to preserve the CCP government's revenue base while ensuring provinces obtain a reasonable share of revenue as well, separate regularized tax systems at the national and local levels were established in 1994.<sup>104</sup>

Deng's economic reforms significantly opened up China to foreign trade and foreign direct investments (FDI), which not only stimulated rapid economic growth, but also provided China with a critical opportunity to catch up with the global technological developments that it had isolated itself from during its era of self-reliance. In terms of foreign aid and assistance, China's membership in the international financial regimes of the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the Asian Development Bank beginning in 1981 helped further advance China's economic development through the substantial use of development loans and credit.<sup>105</sup>

The sustained high level of economic development has continued on through the post-Deng era, as annual GDP growth rates for China from 1995-2004 measured between 7.1-10.5 percent (10.5% in 1995, 9.6% in 1996, 8.8% in 1997, 7.8% in 1998, 7.1% in 1999, 8.0% in 2000, 7.5% in 2001, 8.0% in 2002, 9.1% in 2003, and 9.5%

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<sup>104</sup> Kenneth Lieberthal, *Governing China: From Revolution Through Reform*, 2d ed. (New York, N.Y.: W.W. Norton & Company, 2004), 249-54; and Dernberger, "The People's Republic of China at 50," 609-10.

<sup>105</sup> Dernberger, "The People's Republic of China at 50," 609-10; and Lieberthal, *Governing China*, 254-59.

in 2004).<sup>106</sup> With China's accession into the World Trade Organization (WTO) in December 2001, China's domestic market has become increasingly open to foreign goods and services, and foreigners may now establish their own enterprises in many sectors of China's economy, with more opportunities for trade expansion expected in the future. Moreover, China's foreign trade in constant dollars has grown at an average rate of about 15 percent annually since 1979, and FDI has grown so spectacularly that China has been continually ranked as the largest developing country receiving FDI since 1992. Overall, China has possessed the world's fastest growing major industrial economy since the early 1980s, with its overall per capita GDP in constant *yuan* having roughly quadrupled between 1978 and 2001.<sup>107</sup>

According to Alagappa's explanatory framework, sustained economic development decreases the weight of coercion in governance and the political power and influence of the military through the combined effect of its consequences, such as: 1) the state's reduced role in managing the allocation of goods and services, which gives rise to privately-owned institutions and enterprises as political actors; 2) the emergence of middle and working classes which may seek political participation; 3) the development of civil society, which gives rise to the political, economic, and social forces that pose a variety of challenges to the state; 4) the development of administrative and legal institutions needed to manage state problems through non-coercive measures and to improve governance; 5) the increasing emphasis on transparency and accountability in governance, especially with regards to the use of force; and 6) the integration of the national economy into the global market, which increases the salience of factors in the international context. In short, sustained economic development ultimately produces "a complex state, society, and economy" of which are especially resistant to the use of force in governance and well beyond the administrative capacities of the military and other

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<sup>106</sup> Figures derived from "General and Financial Indicators of the People's Republic of China," *The U.S.-China Business Council: PRC Economic Statistics* (Updated 21 April 2005) [reference on-line]; available from <http://www.uschina.org/statistics/economy.html>; Internet; accessed 30 November 2005; and Dernberger, "The People's Republic of China at 50," 612.

<sup>107</sup> Lieberthal, *Governing China*, 128, 246, 255, 259.

coercive state institutions, thus necessitating the development and strengthening of non-coercive state institutions to administer an increasingly developed nation-state.<sup>108</sup>

Indeed, sustained economic development has made China's state, society, and economy more complex and less vulnerable to the use of force as a dependable tool of governance. In the wake of Tiananmen, state reliance on coercion to govern China has become less practical, thus reducing the political power and influence of the PLA relative to non-coercive state institutions. Sustained economic development in China has produced an increasingly prosperous civil society, whereby a significant and expanding portion of Chinese consumers can not only afford basic items such as refrigerators and television sets, but also personal luxuries such as cars, computers, mobile phones, and designer clothes. It has also produced an increasingly well-informed, organized, and self-mobilized society that has especially flourished in the information age, as access to various media, ideas, and other data has become increasingly available.<sup>109</sup>

Moreover, China's transition to a market-based economy has led to the emergence of political, economic, and social forces within civil society that pose a variety of administrative challenges to the state and that the military is ill-equipped to manage through non-coercive measures. Civil society organizations in China - such as consumer advocacy groups, labor unions, industrial associations, religious organizations, environmental groups, and intellectual organizations - have greatly expanded during the reform era and exerted some degree of influence on the CCP's approach to state governance, either as officially or unofficially sanctioned groups.<sup>110</sup> As a result of China's economic liberalization, private enterprises - both domestic and foreign - have also emerged as politically influential forces themselves. Private entrepreneurs, foreign investors, and the expanding middle and working classes have necessitated the development and strengthening of China's administrative and legal institutional

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<sup>108</sup> Multiah Alagappa, "Investigating and Explaining Change: An Analytical Framework," in *Coercion and Governance: The Declining Political Role of the Military in Asia* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2001), 50, 58, 62.

<sup>109</sup> George Gilboy and Eric Heginbotham, "China's Coming Transformation," *Foreign Affairs* 80, no. 4 (July-August 2001): 29-30.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid.; and Mary E. Gallagher, "China: The Limits of Civil Society in a Late Leninist State," in *Civil Society and Political Change in Asia: Expanding and Contracting Democratic Space*, ed. Multiah Alagappa (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2004), 419-443.

frameworks to provide protection for industrial resources, assets, and investments. International financial institutions such as the World Bank and IMF have also become major political actors in China, as they are brought in to help manage China's increasingly complex economy while bolstering the significance of non-coercive measures in state governance through robust economic institutionalization.

Overall, state governance via coercion has become an increasingly impractical instrument for managing China's vibrant state, society, and economy today, as it may jeopardize political legitimacy. While coercion - the key asset of the military - has become less salient in governing China, non-coercive state institutions have become more significant in governance. For post-Deng civilian leaders to sufficiently manage an increasingly complex China and to secure legitimacy of the current political system, non-coercive state institutions have thus been increasingly strengthened via sustained economic development to address the growing variety of political, economic, and social challenges through non-coercive means.

According to Alagappa's explanatory framework, legitimacy of a political system may be ascertained by investigating "the existence of shared norms and values, their translation into widely accepted institutions, conformity with established rules in the acquisition and exercise of state power, and consent of the governed."<sup>111</sup> To illustrate increasing legitimacy of China's political system requires exploring the norms governing Chinese politics, the significance of non-coercive state institutions in governance (especially those dealing with law), the status of China's legitimacy in the international context, and the degree of consent by the governed.

As a result of Deng's political reforms, the reestablishment of norms governing Chinese elite politics restored a significant degree of political stability back to the CCP, and has thus increased legitimacy of China's political system as it marked a significant break from the political instability and internal strife of the past that have led to dire consequences for China. One of the most significant norms implemented was the adoption of written rules regulating intra-party politics, explicated in the milestone document *Some Principles on the Party's Internal Politics*, published in February 1980.

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<sup>111</sup> Alagappa, "Investigating and Explaining Change," 61.

This document granted a number of basic rights to CCP members to help curb the devastating impact of political defeats in power struggles. Although the practice of upholding these rights remains uncertain, the cases of Hu Yaobang and Zhao Ziyang – both of whom were gradually eased out of their high-ranking positions after being defeated in power struggles – provide some historical evidence that political defeats in the reform era have not resulted in harsh internal purges like those under Mao.<sup>112</sup>

Another significant norm implemented under Deng was the mandatory retirement of party and government officials. Established in 1982, the mandatory retirement system imposed a two-term limit on all party and government positions and set the retirement age at 65 for ministers, provincial party secretaries, and governors and at 60 for their deputies. The two-term limit and established retirement ages had the combined effect of drastically changing the ruling elite's composition from a body of poorly-educated, aging revolutionaries to the current group of college-educated, middle-aged technocrats. Moreover, the mandatory retirement system reduced intra-party conflict by removing revolutionary leaders unwilling to give up their positions of power to make room for more regularized, predictable, and feasible promotions of the next generation of leadership, and by also reducing the incentive of post-revolutionary civilian leaders to engage in political conspiracies for career advancement. The system has also created a ruling elite whose members are now mostly college-educated and share similar political views and experiences to facilitate a higher degree of consensus on policy matters. In essence, the mandatory retirement system further stabilized intra-party politics and thus increased legitimacy of China's political system under the CCP, as it facilitated the institutionalization of leadership successions to prevent the perpetuation of power for party and government officials.<sup>113</sup>

In addition to formalized party rules and the mandatory retirement system, Deng adopted limited competition for party offices in 1987 to promote intra-party democracy and, more importantly, to prevent the rise of radical liberals and conservatives within the party. This reform officially instructs that the number of candidates for

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<sup>112</sup> Minxin Pei, "Is China Democratizing?," *Foreign Affairs* 77, no.1 (January-February 1998): 70.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, 70-72.

representation in the party congress must exceed the number of available positions by twenty percent. Similarly, the number of candidates for full and candidate memberships in the Central Committee must exceed the number of available positions by five and twelve percent, respectively. While limited competition has had little success in consolidating intra-party democracy within the CCP, it has nevertheless considerably thwarted the elections and reelections of controversial party and government officials who may potentially threaten the stability of intra-party politics.<sup>114</sup>

The overall effect of reestablished norms governing elite politics helped restore order to a party crippled by the harsh internal purges and mass political campaigns under Mao. These norms have helped facilitate the last two leadership successions (i.e., Deng to Jiang and Jiang to Hu) with no major political setbacks. With the ascension of Hu Jintao as the current PRC leader, the processes by which political leaders deliberate and succeed each other have become much more institutionalized and predictable, and have thus lent increasing legitimacy to China's political system over time, as internal stability at the top makes China's political system less prone to turmoil.

As previously stated, non-coercive state institutions have gradually strengthened over the course of the last two decades via sustained economic development to manage an increasingly complex China. Steps toward revamping and restructuring non-coercive state institutions beginning under Deng's political reforms have helped improve China's state governance and political stability, and have thus far helped increase legitimacy of the political system. As China's market economy has necessitated the development of the state's overall capacity to deal with problems through means other than coercion, non-coercive state institutions have consequently gained significance as vital and practical tools of governance. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), the Ministry of State Security (MSS), and the CCP International Liaison Department, for instance, all feature prominently in managing international security problems today. Both the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Cooperation deal extensively with issues related to China's growing economy in the domestic and international context. In short, non-coercive state institutions matter more

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<sup>114</sup> Pei, "Is China Democratizing?," 72-73.



than ever in the face of today's increasingly developed China. As these institutions become increasingly capable in managing a wide variety of state problems and challenges, China's political system will garner increasing legitimacy.

Among the most important non-coercive state institutions that have strengthened during the reform era have been the National People's Congress (NPC) and China's legal system. Since the early 1990s, the NPC has increasingly strengthened and asserted itself as China's supreme lawmaking body with a legitimate role in formulating and implementing legislation. Over the past two decades, it has developed a substantial body of formal laws and regulations to govern China during the reform era, marking a drastic break from the virtual lawlessness of the Mao era. Members of the NPC now actively sponsor their own legislative bills, debate over legislation, vote for or against important bills, and possess the power to accept or reject the CCP's nominees for senior executive posts. In the past, the NPC's approval of legislative bills and CCP nominations for official posts were virtually automatic. Since the early 1990s, however, the NPC has shown signs of assertiveness in its approval and rejection of a number of bills and nominations regardless of the CCP, although the NPC has avoided direct confrontation with the party on key legislation. Although far from being a fully independent legislative body, the NPC has nevertheless increasingly strengthened to become a politically powerful institution that may potentially challenge the CCP's monopoly of power in the future.<sup>115</sup>

The composition and credibility of the NPC have also improved during the reform era. In the past, NPC posts were generally assigned to those officials approaching the twilight of their careers, but now these posts are being occupied by powerful political figures and have included the appointments of retired party officials, thus giving the NPC more institutional power and credibility as the supreme lawmaking body in China. The NPC's permanent professional staff has grown significantly during the reform era, expanding from fewer than twenty members in 1978 to more than 2,000 in 1990, thus enhancing its institutional capacities to formulate and implement legislation. The profile

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<sup>115</sup> Pei, "Is China Democratizing?," 74-76; Lieberthal, *Governing China*, 176-77; and Yasheng Huang, "Why China Will Not Collapse," *Foreign Policy* 99 (Summer 1995): 60-61.

of NPC deputies has also drastically changed since 1978. The average deputy in the NPC is now younger and more educated than their predecessors. The number of non-party deputies in the NPC increased slightly between 1978 and 1993. Intellectuals and government officials now comprise nearly half of the congress, while the combined representation in the NPC by soldiers, peasants, and workers – who collectively make up the CCP’s principal base of support - has dropped from about two-thirds of the NPC to less than a third. Most importantly, because of its growing strength, independence, and credibility, the NPC has been increasingly viewed by Chinese citizens as a legitimate institutional channel for communicating their grievances.<sup>116</sup>

China’s legal system has undertaken extensive reforms since 1978 to provide a legal framework for China’s market economy to operate within the domestic and global markets, and to prevent the political excesses that may give rise to another Cultural Revolution - a period marked by virtual lawlessness. Between 1978 and 1994, the NPC enacted nearly 175 laws, and local people’s congresses passed an additional 3,000. Most of China’s laws have borrowed extensively from Western legal traditions, doctrines, concepts, and terminology.<sup>117</sup>

Despite the legal system’s poor enforcement of the law, an increasing number of Chinese citizens and businessmen continue to rely on the legal system to protect their personal rights and property claims. Since the legal reforms began under Deng, the number of litigation cases has risen dramatically in Chinese courts. Between 1986 and 1996, commercial litigation cases over contract disputes increased 387 percent, administrative litigation cases against the government 12,483 percent, and civil litigation cases over personal rights 212 percent. Over time, a strong sense of and desire for legal protection, especially with regards to personal and property rights, seems to have developed among Chinese citizens according to opinion polls from the mid-1990s. Moreover, this development may have influenced the government’s attitude toward embracing more robust legal reforms to garner more legitimacy. In the 1990s, for instance, the NPC adopted a law that permits Chinese citizens to sue the government for

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<sup>116</sup> Pei, “Is China Democratizing?,” 74-76; Lieberthal, *Governing China*, 176-77; and Huang, “Why China Will Not Collapse,” 60-61.

<sup>117</sup> Pei, “Is China Democratizing?,” 76-77.

abuse of power by government officials – and accordingly, the number of cases has increased annually, with a reported success rate of about 40 percent.<sup>118</sup>

Overall, China has been gradually strengthening the role of its legal system in governing state-society relations. Since the beginning of the reform era, Beijing has recognized the vital role that law plays in improving state governance in China, even though top leaders have largely emphasized *rule by law* as opposed to *rule of law*.<sup>119</sup> The rapid growth and rising independence of the legal community in China has been one major trend indicative of the strengthening of China's legal system, as the number of lawyers and private law firms in China have increased substantially during the reform era. Moreover, the creation of an extensive body of law by the NPC and the increasing growth of politically influential interest groups - such as private entrepreneurs, foreign investors, and the expanding middle and working classes – have, for the moment, spurred the development of an acceptable legal framework, which may possibly lead to the future development of a more robust one, given China's rapid pace of growth. Although the CCP government has been cautious in accelerating institutional reforms, China's legal system has nevertheless cultivated an increasing emphasis on personal rights, property rights, and governance according to law. Despite the absence of democratization and rule of law, China's legal system, at the present, does provide an adequate legal framework, which, according to Randall Peerenboom, is currently transitioning from *rule by law* to a version of *rule of law* – the extent of which has been actively debated by scholars.<sup>120</sup>

Although the strengthening of other non-coercive state institutions have also been significant factors lending greater legitimacy to China's political system, the strengthening of the NPC and China's legal system have been especially important. Both have codified formal laws and regulations, placed emphasis on personal and property

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<sup>118</sup> Pei, "Is China Democratizing?," 76-77; and Lieberthal, *Governing China*, 302-03.

<sup>119</sup> According to Kenneth Lieberthal, "'rule of law' makes the law supreme over the desires of individual officials, whereas 'rule by law' makes officials supreme and the law an instrument of their governance." Quoted in Lieberthal, *Governing China*, 303.

<sup>120</sup> Pei, "Is China Democratizing?," 76-77; and Lieberthal, *Governing China*, 302-03. On the perspective that China is transitioning from "rule by law" to a version of "rule of law," see Randall Peerenboom, *China's Long March Toward Rule of Law* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

rights, and instilled the primacy of law in state governance, despite their weaknesses due to the limits placed on both institutions by the CCP. More importantly, the NPC and the legal system, as previously noted in this chapter, currently possess increasing military oversight and responsibilities, along with codified laws and regulations officially subordinating the military under these institutions – thus laying the groundwork for consolidating civilian control of the PLA.<sup>121</sup>

Formal recognition of the PRC as a full-fledged member within the international system of nation-states has gradually consolidated the legitimacy of China's political system over the course of the past several decades. Formal recognition of the PRC largely resulted from two immensely significant developments in PRC foreign affairs: 1) the United States' withdrawal of its containment policy toward the PRC in the early 1970s, which led to Beijing's replacement of Taipei (Republic of China (ROC)) as the sole representative government of "China" in the United Nations in 1971; and 2) the United States' official acknowledgment of Beijing as the legitimate government of all of China in 1979, which established formal diplomatic relations between the PRC and the United States.

These major developments have allowed China to gain entry into international organizations, such as the World Bank and the IMF, which have been greatly beneficial to China's economic development through much-needed international financial aid, nation-building assistance, and foreign capital and investments. In addition, China's membership in these international organizations has also helped in two other ways. First, it helped stimulate the development and strengthening of non-coercive state institutions to help manage China's growing state, society, and economy. Second, as international organizations often reinforce norms that discourage the use of force as a primary tool for governance, China's membership in these organizations has thus emphasized reliance upon diplomatic instruments to resolve international conflicts of interest through negotiations, as well as reinforced conformity to the practice of non-coercive measures widely accepted by the international community. Indeed, one of the

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<sup>121</sup> Scobell, "China's Evolving Civil-Military Relations," 227-44; and Bickford, "Regularization and the Chinese People's Liberation Army," 456-74.

most notable trends for China throughout the reform era has been its increasing membership and active participation in international organizations, such as the United Nations in 1971, the World Bank, the IMF, and the Asian Development Bank beginning in 1981, Asian-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) in 1991, Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in 1996 (as a full dialogue partner in ASEAN + 3), and the World Trade Organization (WTO) in December 2001. Despite the sensitive issues - such as human rights, the absence of democratization, and Taiwan independence - which occasionally arise, formal recognition of the PRC within the international system as the sole legitimate government of all of China has helped secure the legitimacy of China's current political system over time.

Perhaps the most important indicator of political legitimacy is the degree of consent to the existing political system accorded by the governed. Although consent is especially difficult to measure, there are nevertheless a number of factors indicating at least a degree of tacit acceptance of the current political system by citizens in China. These factors include a new social contract governing state-society relations in China, gradual attempts at improving state governance, prolonged political and social stability, and the adoption of Chinese nationalism as the current governing ideology.

The relationship between the state and society in China has changed so dramatically that a new social contract, whereby the prior restraints on personal and economic freedoms have been lifted in exchange for the public's tacit acceptance of the CCP's authority, seems to have emerged, although this contract has never been officially articulated by Beijing. Despite strong challenges from political dissidents during the Pro-Democracy Movement in 1989, the notion of "personal freedom for CCP authority" has seemingly consolidated in China - expressed in a variety of dramatic changes in state-society relations during the reform era. Personal liberties of Chinese citizens, for instance, have expanded greatly - today, it is common to hear individuals make complaints against the CCP government in public without fear of arrest or punishment, although there are certainly limits to which individuals can independently organize for their respective causes. Chinese citizens can also freely choose their own lifestyles, migrate to different locations within China, start their own private businesses, and obtain

passports to travel abroad - provided they have sufficient funds to do so. Even Beijing's controversial one child policy has been relaxed. In addition, Beijing's commitment to structural economic liberalization has produced sustained growth in the level of material prosperity among Chinese citizens – hence, an increasing number of Chinese consumers can now afford the basic items and personal luxuries that were once inaccessible to them. Along with increased personal liberties and improved material prosperity, the level of political repression has dropped dramatically since the reform era began. Despite its tenuous credibility with the international community, Beijing has significantly reduced its political repression by shifting its strategy from mass to selective repression, whereby the CCP government mostly targets the most prominent political dissidents.<sup>122</sup>

Beijing has made gradual attempts at improving state governance, especially in the vast countryside where over 70 percent of China's population resides and where governance has been the most difficult for Beijing, through the introduction of semi-open competitive elections at the village level. These elections, first introduced back in the mid-1980s and then expanded throughout China in 1988, have reached nearly four-fifths of Chinese villages, with a large portion of village officials having gone through at least one election. Elections for village official posts have been genuinely competitive (whereby there are more candidates than available positions), have posted high turnover rates on occasion, and have actually improved rural governance in Chinese villages, as tax collection and official accountability improved while crime and birth rates in villages fell after elections were introduced. Moreover, the relationship between the central and provincial governments has become much more institutionalized. Not only does Beijing command direct authority to appoint and fire every top provincial official, it is also much more willing to discipline and even dismiss officials on the spot for disobedience of central policies than it had been in the past. During the Mao era, the average tenure of provincial governors, for instance, was about six years. During the reform era, however, average tenure declined steadily to about three to four years, thus indicating the increased political clout of the central government over the provinces.<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> Pei, "Is China Democratizing?," 77-78; and Gilboy and Heginbotham, "China's Coming Transformation," 29-30.

<sup>123</sup> Huang, "Why China Will Not Collapse," 59-60.

Another significant factor has been the ability of the post-Deng governments under Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao to maintain perhaps China's most stable period in the last 150 years while sustaining high levels of growth and development in China's state, society, and economy since Tiananmen. Many Chinese citizens eagerly wish to move beyond their distressing past of foreign invasions, regional divisions, civil war, mass political movements, and domestic violence. Both Jiang and Hu have been successful in maintaining a relatively stable environment that has given most Chinese citizens expectations of economic progress rather than of political and social chaos, thus lending added legitimacy to China's political system over time despite the absence of democratization.<sup>124</sup>

Along with the decline of communism in the post-Cold War era, Beijing's adoption of Chinese nationalism as its governing ideology actually strengthened the legitimacy of the CCP government and its political system. Although the suppression of the Pro-Democracy Movement in 1989 severely damaged the legitimacy of the CCP, many citizens who had supported demonstrators at Tiananmen began to accept Beijing's decision to use force to avoid political and social chaos. The fall of the Communist Bloc helped reinforce the desire among Chinese citizens to avoid the instability that may have occurred if China's political system had been violently overthrown. Even while Tiananmen had dealt a severe blow to its legitimacy, the CCP still maintained power, but needed an alternative source of legitimacy to sustain its rule over China while communism fell to the wayside. Thus, the CCP began to revive traditional Chinese values - such as political and social stability, obedience, and harmony - as it shifted toward the use of Chinese nationalism as its governing ideology in the aftermath of Tiananmen.<sup>125</sup>

Beijing's use of Chinese nationalism has been very effective in sustaining and advancing the legitimacy of the CCP government, since most citizens in China share a common Chinese identity and have a vested interest in preserving Chinese culture. With over ninety percent of China's population consisting of Han ethnicity, the degree of

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<sup>124</sup> Gilboy and Heginbotham, "China's Coming Transformation," 29-30.

<sup>125</sup> Huang, "Why China Will Not Collapse," 57-58.

ethnic divisions, which had facilitated the fall of the Soviet Union, is relatively limited in both scale and significance in China, although ethnic conflicts within the innermost provinces of Tibet and Xinjiang still exist. Moreover, Beijing has greatly benefited from a surging tide of Chinese nationalism among its citizens, as there has been an increasing trend of anti-American sentiment in China since the early 1990s. The failure of Beijing's bid in 1993 to host the 2000 Summer Olympics, for instance, resulted in a furious public protest against Americans, whereby many Chinese citizens believed the United States had opposed China's bid in order to disrupt China's political and economic goals. The 1999 U.S. bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade sparked an even larger wave of protests throughout China.<sup>126</sup>

Overall, China's sustained level of economic development and the increasing legitimacy of China's political system together have served as powerful structural constraints that have attenuated the reliance on coercion in governance over time in both the domestic and international context. Thus accordingly, the political power and influence of the PLA relative to non-coercive state institutions have reduced in the post-Deng era - as evidenced by the overall reduction in the size of PLA forces since the reform era began, the lack of PLA representation in the Politburo Standing Committee, the declining military profile in other high-level party committees, the military's apparent divestiture of commercial enterprises and activities, the corresponding loss of extra-budgetary revenues which makes the military more dependent upon state coffers, official subordination of the PLA under the NPC and legal system, and the overall strengthening of non-coercive state institutions relative to the coercive state institutions.

As previously stated in Chapter I, the interplay of coercion, economic development, and political legitimacy can explain long-term civil-military changes and continuities; it cannot, however, adequately explain specific developments in civil-military relations. Hence, the explanatory framework must shift its focus onto the agency level of explanation. This leads to the second part of Alagappa's explanatory framework

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<sup>126</sup> Huang, "Why China Will Not Collapse," 57-58; and Peter Hays Gries, *China's New Nationalism: Pride, Politics, and Diplomacy* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 2004), 13-18, 128-33.



concerning the interplay of interests, power, and beliefs of the key civilian and military institutions and actors involved, as well as the influence of the power and beliefs of civil society and international actors.

***b. Interplay of Interests, Power, and Beliefs***

Explaining specific developments in civil-military relations requires observing the outcome of the interaction between the interests, power, and beliefs of the key civilian and military institutions and actors involved while accounting for the influence of the power and beliefs of civil society and international actors. In situations where political systems are consolidated, political beliefs primarily determine the pattern of civil-military relations, yet the content of civil-military relations must account for the interests and distribution of power among the key civilian institutions (e.g. the legislature and communist party) and military institutions (e.g. the armed forces and paramilitary forces) involved. In contrast, in situations where political systems are contested or in transition, the interests and distribution of power among the key civilian and military institutions and actors involved ultimately determine specific developments in civil-military relations. In both situations, the influence of civil society (e.g. citizen-organized special interest groups, private enterprises, official media, consumers, and labor unions) and international actors (in particular, major world powers, international institutions, and foreign media) are also likely to affect the pattern and content of civil-military relations.<sup>127</sup>

China's political system is increasingly garnering legitimacy with sustained economic development and the emergence of non-coercive state institutions to help manage China's increasingly complex state, society, and economy (as observed in the previous section of this chapter). Because of its enduring authoritarian nature, however, China's political system has yet to fully consolidate into a political framework that is entirely accepted by all Chinese citizens. Nevertheless, China's political system is in the midst of a transition in which Beijing may likely promote further political liberalization in the future. Because China has changed so dramatically within the last several decades, George Gilboy and Eric Heginbotham have cited three reasons why the

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<sup>127</sup> Alagappa, "Investigating and Explaining Change," 58, 63-66.

CCP government will likely opt to liberalize its current political system: 1) China's altered civil society has become increasingly difficult for party and state officials to manage with the inflexible political and social structures currently in place; 2) political suppression of independent social organizations obstructs further gains in China's economic development; and 3) the PRC leadership under Hu Jintao will likely promote reform-minded leaders to drive political reforms.<sup>128</sup> Thus, as China's political system remains in transition, the interests and distribution of power among the key civilian and military institutions and actors involved predominantly explain the specific developments in civil-military relations in China.

While civilian leaders in the CCP have been attentive to the interests and power of civil society, the state institutional apparatus, and external actors, they have been especially attentive to the interests and power of the PLA, since it is the key institution that protects the hegemonic position of the CCP. As previously discussed in this chapter, the generational shifts in the civilian and military leaderships over time have given rise to two distinct groups: 1) technocratic civilian leaders in the CCP who are skilled in bureaucratic management and largely operate within the institutional boundaries of state governance, but lack military experience; and 2) professionalized military leaders who are mostly concerned with the ongoing development of its institutions via professionalization and resource procurement, but lack political expertise. The generational shifts marked a significant break from the past, when the CCP and the PLA had shared virtually the same group of senior personnel in command. Thus, with increasing differentiation, the interests and distribution of power of civilian and military leaderships have also changed over time. Since civilian party leaders of the post-revolutionary generation seem unlikely to command the vast personal authority once accorded to both Mao and Deng, they must continually cater to the interests of the PLA to build political support while establishing civilian supremacy over the military.

Moreover, with the drastic decline of communism in the post-Cold War era, the ideological basis for upholding party supremacy and adhering to military subordination under the CCP has eroded. To maintain their claim to legitimacy, civilian

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<sup>128</sup> Gilboy and Heginbotham, "China's Coming Transformation," 34-36.

party leaders have adopted Chinese nationalism as the CCP's governing ideology - shifting the party's focus from promoting communist principles to advancing the interests of the entire Chinese nation - and have maintained additional claims to CCP legitimacy with sustained economic development and continuing political and social stability in China.<sup>129</sup>

Despite increasing differentiation between the party and the military, the PLA continues to accept and protect party supremacy, as evidenced by its role in the suppression of the Pro-Democracy Movement at Tiananmen Square in 1989. The PLA's subordination under the CCP had historically rested upon communist ideology, the charismatic personal leaderships of Mao, Deng, and other revolutionary leaders, and the inculcated belief in party supremacy that firmly entrenched the principle of civilian control within the PLA ever since its creation in 1927 and thereafter the establishment of the PRC in 1949. Over time, however, the foundations for civilian party control of the PLA have changed. As communism has gone into drastic decline and charismatic leaders of the revolutionary generation have passed from the scene, the ideological rhetoric of "class struggles" and "contradictions" no longer provides the basis for PLA subordination. Instead, PLA support of the CCP has been based primarily upon the performance of civilian leaders to sustain China as a politically stable and economically prosperous nation-state, as well as the ability of the party to satisfy the military's interests. With increasing specialization in their respective professions, civilian and military leaderships continue to lack the common experiences that were once essential to the organic party-army connection between the CCP and the PLA. Thus, although it remains essentially a party army, the PLA has increasingly appeared as a distinct institution separate from the party in the post-Deng era.<sup>130</sup>

In the post-Deng era, the PLA is no longer the power broker that it once was in the past. Compared to their revolutionary counterparts, military leaders of the post-revolutionary generation lack the same level of political assets and informal

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<sup>129</sup> Multiah Alagappa, "Asian Civil-Military Relations: Key Developments, Explanations, and Trajectories," in *Coercion and Governance: The Declining Political Role of the Military in Asia* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2001), 448.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid, 446-48.

connections with civilian leaders, and therefore must increasingly rely upon formal institutional channels and bureaucratic mechanisms to address their concerns. With the emergence of stronger non-coercive state institutions (such as the NPC, the legal system, financial institutions, state ministries, and party administrative organs), the PLA must now compete more than ever with an increasing variety of state actors for budgetary allocations and government resources. Moreover, civil society in China today is much more robust and virtually independent of the PLA for its services in political, economic, and social development and mobilization. In addition, the institutional capacity needed to manage China's increasingly complex state, society, and economy is well beyond that of the PLA. Despite its decreasing power and influence relative to civilian leadership, civil society, and non-coercive state institutions, the PLA remains a significant political force that appears to be becoming increasingly bureaucratic in nature as the generational shift and military professionalization continue through the post-Deng era.<sup>131</sup>

As previously observed in this chapter, China's sustained economic development has necessarily spurred increasing consolidation and strengthening of non-coercive state institutions, such as the NPC and China's legal system, to manage China's ever-growing state, society, and economy in the post-Deng era. With the emergence of these institutions, the significance of coercion in governance has reduced, as these institutions have increasingly facilitated reliance on the exercise of non-coercive measures to address China's political, economic, and social problems while limiting the role of coercion in governing China. More importantly, non-coercive state institutions have arisen as emerging powerful actors in pursuit of their own institutional interests. Among the most significant institutions have been the NPC and the legal system, which have sought to maintain their powerful positions as *de facto* institutional checks on military power by reinforcing civilian control of the military through formal laws and regulations that officially subordinate the armed forces under civilian leadership and institutions.

Of major significance to civil-military relations in China has been the growing relationship between the PLA and the PRC State. Since the reform era began,

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<sup>131</sup> Mulvenon, "China," 318-19; and Alagappa, "Asian Civil-Military Relations," 450.

the PLA has gradually developed from a strictly party army into a party-state military in which the CCP and the PRC State both monitor and supervise the PLA through their respective institutions. Deng's reforms, however, had institutionalized increasing separation between the party and the state, which has resulted in a division of responsibilities in which the CCP provides overall policy guidance, and the PRC State exercises overall administration and implementation of policy guidance from the top. Thus accordingly, the PRC state apparatus has assumed increasing responsibility and oversight over defense-related affairs, which has led to increasing links between the PLA and the PRC State. Moreover, the relationship between the PLA and the PRC State has further consolidated with the increasing emphasis on "rule by law" in state governance, the increasing military dependency on state budgetary allocations (especially in the wake of the PLA's divestiture of commercial enterprises and its subsequent diminishing source of extra-budgetary revenues), and the increasing regularization and codification of military affairs in relation to the PRC State. Despite its top official positions being occupied by senior party leadership and periodic efforts by the CCP to denounce talks of *guojiahua* (nationalization of the PLA) in the official PRC media, the PRC State is nevertheless on the rise to becoming a potential challenger to the CCP's monopoly of power as the significance, power, and influence of its institutions increase and its relationship to the PLA strengthens.<sup>132</sup>

In the post-Deng era, civil society in China has drastically transformed into a robust, dynamic entity. Civil society has become much more self-organized and possesses the potential to mobilize as a significant counterforce to resist the power of the party, state, military, and other key institutions and actors. It has also become much less dependent on the state and the party, more open to new ideas and values concerning state governance and state-society relations, and less vulnerable to the ideological influences imposed by the CCP government. Moreover, the ability of the CCP government to control civil society has eroded as a result of the significant decline of the commune system, the work unit (or *danwei*) system, urban neighborhood committees, and state-owned enterprises (SOEs) – all of this coupled by the rapid growth of the private sector,

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<sup>132</sup> Scobell, "China's Evolving Civil-Military Relations," 232-39.

privatized housing, and per capita incomes. Thus, civil society in China has shifted the balance of power in its favor through the emergence of powerful actors within civil society that vigorously seek to advance their own interests (these actors include farmers, the unemployed, consumers, industry associations, labor unions, religious groups and movements, special interest groups such as environmental organizations, official media, and even separatist groups).<sup>133</sup> The collective power of these actors in civil society creates little incentive for the CCP government to rely on coercive measures via the military to deal with the political, economic, and social challenges posed in the domestic front, thus driving the need for developing and strengthening of non-coercive state institutions to manage civil society in China.

While China has historically been affected by changes in the international context, China has been especially more vulnerable to developments in the external environment in the post-Deng era - which in turn have shaped China's domestic environment. With the fall of the Soviet Union and the Communist Bloc in Eastern Europe, communism has lost much of its support worldwide, as few communist regimes still remain in power or even truly adhere to the tenets of their own ideologies. China's transition to a market-based economy and its integration into the global market economy has only further invalidated communist principles in China. Thus, Chinese communism has lost virtually all of its credibility and is no longer the reliable ideological basis for maintaining civilian control of the PLA in the post-Cold War era (Chinese nationalism has since become its replacement as the governing ideology).

China's transition to a market-based economy and its integration into the global market economy has also increased China's exposure to foreign and global economic developments, which have thus far helped develop and reinforce China's institutional capacity to maintain political and social stability without primarily relying upon coercive measures for governance. Since the reform era began, China has become significantly dependent upon foreign trade, capital, and investments to sustain its continuing high level of economic development, as a significant portion of China's

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<sup>133</sup> Pei, "Is China Democratizing?," 79; and Gilboy and Heginbotham, "China's Coming Transformation," 30-34.

domestic economy is vastly linked to the global economy. With most of its exports going toward the United States, Japan, South Korea, and other developed nation-states, China has had little incentive to upset its current trade balance with these countries, although the potential for conflict exists as some countries may appear to be challenging China's rising power in Asia. Nevertheless, China has had more incentive to cooperate with foreign countries to improve its domestic economic and social conditions by developing its economic institutions through foreign assistance from international financial organizations.

International media has emerged as a significant force in reducing the weight of coercion in governance in China, and, by extension, decreasing the political power and influence of the PLA and other coercive state institutions. With representative offices in China, international media has served as a neutral global watchdog, ready to report to the world on incidents of state coercion, such as the 1989 suppression of the Pro-Democracy Movement at Tiananmen Square, which attracted worldwide attention and led to harsh criticisms of the CCP government in both the domestic and international fronts. Moreover, with the ubiquitous nature of international media today, major world powers and international organizations - such as the United States, the European Union, the United Nations, and Amnesty International - are now much more capable of monitoring for incidents of state coercion in China with the help of news correspondents and reporters around the world. Thus, in the wake of Tiananmen, international media has significantly constrained Beijing from readily employing coercive measures against its own citizens.

Overall, as China's political system remains in transition, the interplay of the interests and power of the CCP, the PLA, the PRC State, non-coercive state institutions, civil society, and international actors largely explain the specific developments in civil-military relations in China. Therefore, explanations of the recent events in PRC civil-military relations previously discussed in this chapter - such as the 1995-96 Taiwan Strait Crisis, the 1998 PLA Divestiture of Commercial Enterprises, and the 2001 EP-3 Crisis - are rooted in the degree of congruence (or divergence) between the interests of the actors involved and the distribution of power among them.

## I. CONCLUSION

In sum, recent events in PRC civil-military relations in the post-Deng era – such as the 1995-96 Taiwan Strait Crisis, the 1998 PLA Divestiture of Commercial Enterprises, the 2001 EP-3 Crisis, the 2003 Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) Crisis, the 2003 Ming 361 Submarine Accident, and the 2003 *Shenzhou-5* Manned Space Mission - have suggested that the relationship between the CCP and the PLA has become increasingly less intimate and more bureaucratic in nature as the party and the military increasingly differentiate from each other.

In applying Alagappa's investigative framework, the current balance of civil-military relations in the post-Deng era has been leaning toward increasing civilian supremacy, which characterizes the nature of the relationship between the CCP and the PLA, as civilian leaders possess ultimate jurisdiction over political participation, socioeconomic activities, and illegal activities; command a larger share of jurisdictional power regarding the military's institutional autonomy; and split ultimate decision-making authority with the PLA in security policymaking.

In applying Alagappa's explanatory framework, China's sustained level of economic development and the increasing legitimacy of China's political system help explain the decreasing weight of coercion in governance in China and, by extension, the associated reduction in the political power and influence of the military relative to non-coercive state institutions over time. Explanations of specific developments in PRC civil-military relations, however, must focus on the interests and power between the CCP, the PLA, the PRC State, non-coercive state institutions, civil society, and international actors.



## IV. CONCLUSION

The post-Deng era has witnessed significant developments in the civilian and military spheres that have impacted the relationship between the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and the People's Liberation Army (PLA). These developments include the death of the last revolutionary paramount leader Deng Xiaoping, the generational shifts in the civilian and military leaderships, the increasing professionalization of the PLA officer corps, and two unprecedented orderly successions of post-revolutionary political leadership in the CCP. Other significant developments, however, have had broader consequences for the entire state, society, and economy in China – and, therefore, must also be featured in the analysis of civil-military relations. Such additional developments include the decreasing significance of coercion (the key function of the military) in governance, the sustained high level of economic development in China, the increasing legitimacy of China's political system, the emergence of a robust civil society in China, the rising prominence of international organizations and external actors, and the drastic decline of communism worldwide. To date, most studies on civil-military relations in China have focused primarily on party-military interactions with little regard for the effects of these other developments. Therefore, this thesis advances and applies an alternative analytical framework developed by Multiah Alagappa for analyzing the nature of civil-military relations in China within the context of these developments.

The explanations and theories of civil-military relations presented in the literature review of this thesis have advanced a variety of propositions to explain the numerous trends and developments in civil-military relations. To explain why militaries intervene in politics, scholars have proposed a number of factors - such as the degree of military professionalization, the types of military missions and roles assigned to the armed forces, the weakness of political and state institutions relative to the military, and the strength of government performance in maintaining an economically viable nation-state. Problems of a military government in sustaining its legitimacy have been cited as key causes for the inherent instability and short lifespan of military regimes. Various literatures examining civil-military relations in post-authoritarian states have proposed a range of normative

measures, such as professionalizing the armed forces, restructuring the defense establishment under civilian jurisdiction, and instilling democratic beliefs in governance, to keep the military out of politics. Recent theories of civil-military relations have also emerged to offer contemporary frameworks for analyzing civil-military relations. Michael Desch's structural theory of civil-military relations asserts that the structure of the internal and external threat environment for any given nation-state has an indirect but significant effect on the behavior of civilian and military actors over time and thus largely determines the pattern of civil-military relations. In contrast, Peter Feaver's rationalist theory of civil-military relations maintains that the rational, calculated interactions between key civilian and military actors principally determine the pattern of civil-military relations. Upon reviewing the literature on civil-military relations in China, four models of civilian control – liberal, penetration, symbiosis, and civil-military dualism – have been advanced to explain the unique trends and developments in the relationship between the CCP and the PLA.

Although useful concepts can be drawn from the literature review, most of the explanations and theories of civil-military relations presented do not effectively explain the wide array of developments in civil-military relations in a comprehensive manner. As previously stated, this thesis advances the use of Multiah Alagappa's analytical framework for analyzing civil-military relations in China because it offers the most comprehensive analytical framework to date - as it tackles both the structural and agency levels of explanation, as well as accounts for other important factors such as the significance of the use of force in governance, the power and beliefs of civil society and international actors, the legitimacy of political systems, and the level of economic development.

Determining whether civilian supremacy or military domination has characterized the current nature of PRC civil-military relations in the post-Deng era required the application of the first part of Alagappa's analytical framework: the investigative framework for exploring civil-military changes and continuities. In particular, the investigative framework examined the distribution of ultimate decision-making authority (jurisdiction) and the extent of military participation (scope) in each of the following five

areas of governance: political participation, institutional autonomy, security policymaking, socioeconomic activities, and illegal activities.

*Political Participation.* While the PLA remains a normal yet significant participant in Chinese politics, the scope of the PLA's political participation has significantly declined and its jurisdiction has been largely limited to defense-related affairs. This decline may be attributed to two significant trends that have reduced the scope of the military's political participation: 1) the post-revolutionary generational shifts in both the civilian and military leaderships, which have increasingly differentiated military leaders from party leaders; and 2) the increasing professionalization of the PLA officer corps, which has further fashioned the military as a distinct institution from the party. Thus, as the PLA has become increasingly separate from the party, it has also increasingly lost significant political leverage to civilian leaders, who continue to possess ultimate jurisdiction over the broad political landscape in China.

*Institutional Autonomy.* Civilian and military leaderships share mixed jurisdiction across the wide variety of activities concerning the PLA's institutional autonomy. Nevertheless, civilian leaders command a much larger share of jurisdictional power in this area, since they ultimately decide the appointments and rotations of the top senior military leadership, establish the defense budget allocations for the military, maintain centralized command and control, and set the rules and regulations for how the PLA functions in service to the party, the state, and the country. To gain the military's compliance to civilian control, however, civilian leaders yield some measure of institutional autonomy to the PLA. More specifically, civilian leaders permit the PLA to autonomously organize and manage carefully delineated areas, such as defense policies, military modernization, recruitment criteria, and promotions of personnel below the ranks of the top senior military leadership. In return for gaining a limited degree of institutional autonomy, the PLA refrains from involvement in non-defense related areas, focuses largely on military professionalization, and, most importantly, concedes itself to unquestioned civilian control.

*Security Policymaking.* The scope of the PLA's participation in national security policymaking is extensive, since the formulation and implementation of policies in this

area of governance necessarily entails military participation. Ultimate jurisdiction, however, is diffused among civilian and military leaders in the post-Deng era. Nevertheless, the PLA commands significant influence on national security policymaking, as it greatly possesses the principal sources for defining China's national security threat environment, virtually dominates the defense policy subarena, continually seeks to influence foreign policymaking, and actively participates as a policy advisor and consultant to the civilian leadership in formulating and implementing national strategic objectives.

*Socioeconomic Activities.* Jiang Zemin's order for the PLA's divestiture of its commercial enterprises in 1998 has significantly reduced the PLA's participation in socioeconomic activities, since it has removed the principal source of the military's extra-budgetary revenues (most military businesses have been transferred to state control or dissolved altogether) and has thus made the PLA increasingly dependent on state budgetary allocations. Despite initial resistance and lingering resentment among some military personnel, the largely compliant nature of the PLA's acceptance and execution of Jiang's order for the divestiture apparently suggests that civilian leaders possess ultimate jurisdiction over the military's socioeconomic activities.

*Illegal Activities.* The 1998 divestiture of commercial enterprises also significantly reduced the scope of the PLA's participation in illegal activities, as military corruption largely originated from the PLA's own business operations. Moreover, civilian leaders command ultimate jurisdiction over the military's involvement in illegal activities - as evidenced by the execution of the civilian leadership's orders for the military's divestiture of its commercial enterprises, the intense anti-corruption campaigns, the special investigations of the PLA's finances and accounts, and the discipline investigations conducted by civilian investigators outside military jurisdiction.

Upon examining each of the five areas of governance using Alagappa's investigative framework, the scope of military participation has been extensive, although its scope in political participation, socioeconomic activities, and illegal activities has been significantly declining in recent times. Despite significant military participation in governance, the PLA does not dominate any one particular area of governance - the

military either shares jurisdiction with civilian leadership (as in the cases of institutional autonomy and security policymaking) or defers to civilian jurisdiction (in particular, political participation, socioeconomic activities, and illegal activities). Overall, civilian leaders possess ultimate jurisdiction over political participation, socioeconomic activities, and illegal activities; command a larger share of jurisdictional power regarding the military's institutional autonomy; and split ultimate decision-making authority with the PLA in security policymaking. In short, the application of Alagappa's investigative framework indicates that the balance of civil-military relations in China leans toward increasing civilian supremacy, which has been the current trend characterizing the nature of the relationship between the CCP and the PLA in the post-Deng era.

Explaining how and why civilian leaders continue to exercise control of the PLA required the application of the second part of Alagappa's analytical framework: the explanatory framework for explaining civil-military changes and continuities. The explanatory framework explains the nature of civil-military relations as the outcome of two sets of processes: 1) the structural-level interplay between the weight of coercion in governance, the level of economic development, and the legitimacy of the political system; 2) the agency-level interplay between the interests, power, and beliefs of key civilian and military institutions and actors involved, as well as those of civil society and international actors.

*Interplay of Coercion, Economic Development, and Political Legitimacy.* China's sustained level of economic development has made China's state, society, and economy more complex and less vulnerable to the use of force as a reliable tool of governance. Moreover, China's transition to a market-based economy has led to the emergence of political, economic, and social forces within civil society that pose a variety of administrative challenges to the state and that the military and other coercive state institutions are ill-equipped to manage. Increasing legitimacy of China's political system has been illustrated by the reestablishment of norms governing Chinese politics that have stabilized party leadership successions, the development and strengthening of non-coercive state institutions (in particular, the National People's Congress (NPC) and China's legal system) and their rising significance in governance, the formal international

recognition of the PRC as the sole legitimate government of all of China, and various indications of at least a degree of tacit approval of the current political system by Chinese citizens - which include the presence of a new social contract governing state-society relations in China, whereby more personal freedoms have been granted for the citizens' acceptance of the CCP's authority.

Overall, China's sustained level of economic development and the increasing legitimacy of China's political system have together served as powerful structural constraints reducing the significance of coercion in governance in China over time. Hence, the political power and influence of the PLA relative to non-coercive state institutions have reduced in the post-Deng era - as evidenced by the overall reduction in the size of PLA forces since the start of the reform era, the lack of military representation in the Politburo Standing Committee (PBSC), the declining military profile in other high-level party committees, the military's apparent divestiture of commercial enterprises and activities, the corresponding loss of extra-budgetary revenues which have made the military more dependent upon state coffers, the official subordination of the PLA under the NPC and the legal system, and the overall strengthening and rising significance of non-coercive state institutions relative to the coercive state institutions.

The interplay of coercion, economic development, and political legitimacy can explain civil-military changes and continuities over time; it cannot, however, adequately explain specific developments in civil-military relations. Hence, the explanatory framework must shift its focus onto the agency level of explanation, leading to the second part of Alagappa's explanatory framework concerning the interplay of interests, power, and beliefs of the key civilian and military institutions and actors involved, as well as the influence of the power and beliefs of civil society and international actors.

*Interplay of Interests, Power, and Beliefs.* In general, as China's political system remains in transition, the interplay of the interests and power of the CCP, the PLA, the PRC State and its non-coercive state institutions, civil society, and international actors principally explain the specific developments in PRC civil-military relations. Therefore, explanations of recent events in PRC civil-military relations - such as the 1995-96 Taiwan Strait Crisis, the 1998 PLA Divestiture of Commercial Enterprises, and the 2001

EP-3 Crisis - are essentially rooted in the degree of congruence (or divergence) between the interests of the actors involved and the distribution of power among them.

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